TRADITION IN PROCESS: FRAMING TRADITION IN CULTURAL PRESERVATION AND INVENTION IN JIXIAN IN THE COURSE OF THE MODERNIZATION OF CHINA

Xiaohong Chen

Submitted to the faculty of the University Graduate School in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of Folklore and Ethnomusicology, Indiana University October 2015
Accepted by the Graduate Faculty, Indiana University, in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Doctoral Committee

________________________________________
Jason B. Jackson, Ph.D.
Chairperson

________________________________________
Michael D. Foster, Ph.D.

________________________________________
John H. McDowell, Ph.D.

________________________________________
Henry H. Glassie, Ph.D.

Date of Dissertation Defense: September 10, 2015
To the Jixian People in China
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Pursuing a PhD degree is an academic journey, and also a life journey. At I complete my dissertation and end this long journey at Indiana University, I want to express my deepest gratitude to the people who have supported me. I am deeply grateful to my dissertation research committee members Jason Jackson, Michael Foster, John McDowell, and Henry Glassie. They are great scholars and also great people. Their generous support and academic inspiration through various stages of my PhD degree program - from coursework, candidacy examines, to the final stages of dissertation research - made it possible for me to achieve this education goal. I am especially indebted to my mentor and dissertation committee chair, Dr. Jason Jackson, for his patience, understanding, inspiration, and advice. His strategic supervision really motivated and energized me to achieve my best. When I finally finished my writing and let him read the full draft, his comments were a special reward to my several years work with this project. I also especially thank to Dr. Michael Foster, for his critical input from the proposal phase to the initial writing, which has greatly influenced and inspired me during my continuous writing process. Sincere thanks also give to Dr. McDowell for his careful reading and valuable remarks and his as well Dr. Glassie’s steadfast encouragement and support from my first year coursework to this final project.

At the end of this academic journey, I would also like to thank Professor Roger Janelli and Professor William Hansen, who influenced my studies of folklore at Indiana University in many ways. Professor Hansen also read my manuscript and provided me with great comments. I give my sincere gratitude to Moira Marsh and Sheri Sherrill for their generous support of my studies during this long journey. Thanks to the department staff Chris Roush and Michelle Melhouse for their administrative assistance throughout the years. Thanks for Daniel Peretti’s
editing assistance in the final submission stages of this work. Thanks to Indiana University Libraries and my supervisor Lisa Lent for offering me an enjoyable working position at the Wells Library, so I could complete my dissertation work with peace of mind.

When I hold this final product in my hands, I sincerely feel that without the stories from the Jixian people, I could not have produced these more than three hundred pages. I wish to thank the Jixian people, both named and unnamed in this work, for generously telling me their life stories. I especially thank Yu Qingcheng, Wang Ruihong, and Zhang Xianyue for their kind assistance during my fieldwork in Jixian. I am particularly indebted to my elder sister Yu’e, who led me to a connection with Jixian. Thanks to my family and all my friends in Bloomington and elsewhere in the world who have supported me as I accomplished this research work and my doctoral degree at Indiana University.
In this report of ethnographic research, I explore the relationships characterizing tradition and modernity, culture and economy, and the roles played by the state, local agencies, community, and individuals in the pursuit of local tourism and culturally-focused economic development. My study is based on research observing and analyzing local cultural projects and daily cultural life in Jixian, China. Specific cases include restoring ancient structures, organization of the Dule Temple Fair, and the development of rural cultural tourism and local folk art products. To understand broader themes in these contexts, I formulate a theoretical model of processing tradition in terms of “preserving,” “reconstructing and remaking,” and “inventing” tradition.

This research shows that tradition and modernity are co-constitutive aspects of common process of social change. Tradition contributes to the acceleration of local modernization, whereas, modernization revitalizes tradition with new values and functions in promoting local development. In the context of China, processes relating to local heritage and tradition are incorporated into the state’s modernization plans. In Jixian, local agencies and individuals have wisely used their own strategies to negotiate the conflicts between traditional life and modern life. They have been aware that tradition is a treasure for them to use in building today’s and tomorrow’s life. They creatively find ways to utilize, adapt, and invent traditions and to make tradition modern so as to serve contemporary social needs.
Jason B. Jackson, Ph.D.
Chair

Michael D. Foster, Ph.D.

John H. McDowell, Ph.D.

Henry H. Glassie, Ph.D.
Table of Contents

Acknowledgments v
Lists of Illustrations xiii
Figures xiii
Tables xv

Chapter 1: Introduction 1

Theoretical Review of “Tradition” 3
   Defining and Redefining “Tradition” 4
   Tradition and Modernity 8
   Debates about Chinese Tradition and Modernity 9
Contemporary Issues of Tradition and Modernization in China 15
Reflections of Chinese Folklorists 21
Research Objectives 26
Fieldwork and Methodology 33
Outline of the Dissertation 42

Chapter 2: Locating Jixian in Chinese History and Transformation 46

Chinese Culture in History 46
Jixian as a Part of a Whole 49
Reading Jixian from History and Local Gazetteers 56
The Impact of Modernization on Traditional Culture 66
Transformation of Jixian Culture 74
Findings from the Old and the New Local Gazetteers 78
Chapter 3: Cultural Tourism Played in the Preservation and Invention of Local Cultures

The Modernization of Jixian in the Chinese Tourism Boom
Jixian’s Potential for Developing Cultural Tourism
Jixian’s Strategies: Utilization of Tradition and Innovation of Culture
The Rise of Rural Leisure Tours and Folk Village Projects in Jixian
Encounters in Yushi Zhuang: Modern Tourism Changes the Village
  The Legends of Yushi Village
  Interview with Yushi Village’s Hero Han Zhen
  The Other Voice I heard from Yushi Village

Chapter 4: Preserving, Remaking, and Inventing Tradition: The Model of Processing Tradition

Preserving the Original Form of the Dule Temple
Reconstructing the Ancient Town
Remaking Tradition: The Dule Temple Fair
Inventing Tradition: Folk Arts in Local Cultural Innovation
  The Emergence of the New Stone Art Culture
  UNESCO Folk Art Master Yu Qingcheng
  Yushi Village’s Craftsman
Dynamics in Processing Tradition

Chapter 5: Framing Tradition and Cultural Mixing: Old and New, Rural and Urban, Local and Global

The Breakdown of Boundaries in Local Cultural Practices
During the Holiday Season: the Lunar Chinese New Year
The Temple Fair Visitors 205
Celebrating Western Valentine’s Day in Jixian Town 211
The Lantern Festival and the *Huahui* Assembly 213

Daily Cultural Life in Jixian Town 219
A Family’s Life from Village to Town 221
Public Entertainment in the Drum Tower Square 223
*Gan Ji* (赶集): A Traditional Way of Shopping 230
Local Snacks (Little Eats 小吃) 233

*San beng zi*: Transportation in Town 234

Conclusion 236

**Chapter 6: Framing Tradition and Cultural Mixing:**
**Rural Culture in the Interaction of Urban and Rural** 237

Urban and Rural Encounters in the Mountain Village Dapingan 239
City People Come down to the Mountain Village 240
Tan Zhong and the Folklore Performance Stage 246
Root Carving Craftsman Gao Changgui 255

Staying in a Farmer’s Guest House at the Foot of Pan Mountain 259
A Rural Paradise: Guojiagou Village 265
The Gourd Painting Craft Program 266
A Foreigners’ Chinese Wedding Ceremony in Guojiagou Village 268

Preservation and Reinvention of Tradition in Xijingyu Village 275
Feng Jicai Speaking on Preserving Historic Cultural Villages 277
Xijingyu, an Old Historical Cultural Village 279
Xijingyu at the Crossroads of the Traditional and the Modern 271
Traditional Homes 285
Traditional Crafts Workshops 293
Zhou Jiguang’s Puppet Show House 296
The Future: A New Plan for Preserving Xijingyu Village 304

Chapter 7: Conclusion 310
Traditional Culture and Cultural Tradition 312
Authentic Tradition is Tradition through Social Processes 315
The Relationship of Culture and Economy: Dynamics of Culture 317
Power Relations among the State, Local Agencies, and Individuals 319
One Process: Tradition and Modernity 322

Notes 325

Bibliography 335

Glossary 343

Appendixes 345
A Chart of the Main Chinese Lunar Festivals
A Chart of the Main Chinese Solar Calendar Festivals

Curriculum Vitae
Lists of Illustrations

Figures:

Figure 1.1 Location of Jixian 27
Figure 1.2 Jixian Today. Photo by author, 2011 29
Figure 1.3 The Conceptual Model of Processes of Tradition 37
Figure 2.1 Luo Zhongli’s oil painting Father, 1980 47
Figure 2.2 Grandmother, by Yu Qingcheng. Photo by author, 2011 49
Figure 2.3 Printed image of Jizhou zhi 58
Figure 2.4 Printed image of Minguo Jixian zhi 61
Figure 2.5 A picture of the editors of Minguo Jixian zhi. 61
Figure 3.1 Jixian county tourism map. Source: Jixian Travel Bureau website 100
Figure 3.2 Ye yan painting “Wen Dao.” Source: Jixian Travel Bureau website 102
Figure 3.3 Tourists in Guojiagou village. Photo by author, 2011 106
Figure 3.4 Jixian rural tourism. Photo by author, 2011 108
Figure 3.5 Zhang Xianyue in front of the Wanfo Temple. Photo by author, 2011 117
Figure 3.6 The 99 steps in the Wanfo Temple. Photo by author, 2011 117
Figure 3.7 Yushi village leader Han Zhen. Photo by author, 2011 122
Figure 4.1 Guanyin Pavilion in the Dule Temple. Photo by author, 2011 132
Figure 4.2 Ancient town map. Source: the 1831 edition of Jizhou zhi (Jizhou Gazetteer) 141
Figure 4.3 Jixian’s reconstructed ancient town. Photo by author, 2011 144
Figure 4.4 Opening ceremony of the eighth Dule Temple Fair. Photo by author, 2011 156
Figure 4.5 Guanyin Statue in the Dule Temple. Source: Jixian Travel Bureau Website 158
Figure 4.6 Ritual Guanyin ci fu. Photo by author, 2011 160
Figure 4.7 Receiving fortune ribbons from the ritual Guanyin ci fu. Photo by author, 2011 160
Figure 4.8 Author and Huahui performers in the Dule Temple. Photo taken on 2/8/2011 165
Table 2.1: Data Comparison of Jizhou zhi (1831) and Minguo Jixian zhi (1944)

Table 2.2: Data Comparison Based on the Three Local Gazetteers (1831 -2006)
Chapter 1
Introduction

My dissertation research topic is “Tradition in Process: Framing Tradition in Cultural Preservation and Invention in Jixian in the Course of the Modernization of China.”¹ This research is based on ethnographic fieldwork in Jixian, China. The study focuses on exploring the processes of tradition in the course of local cultural tourism development and modernization in the transformation era of China, exploring the relationships of tradition and modernity, culture and economy, the dynamics of preserving and inventing tradition. It also examines the roles played by state, local agencies, communities, and individuals in the process.

Jixian is a place located in the hinterland of Northern China, just eighty-eight kilometers away from the capital Beijing. It is named by the United Nations as “A Thousand-Years Old County (Qian nian gu xian 千年古县).” Jixian has spectacular geographic features, with mountains, water, plains, and Mesoproterozoic terrain.² Jixian also possesses many Stone Age archaeological findings and ancient architectural relics. The Huangyaguan Great Wall in the north of Jixian is on the World Heritage List.³ The Dule Temple is a key unit among the national cultural relics. In its long history, Jixian’s local economy has heavily depended on agriculture, so the local culture shows colorful agricultural features. Since the 1980s, China has entered a new developmental era. The central government of China has carried out a “reform and opening up” policy and set up modernization as a national development goal.⁴ This policy has encouraged locals to seek all possible ways to facilitate modernization and economic development. In the past, Jixian locals had no idea to utilize local cultural resources to promote the local economy and to improve their life quality. Working under the national blueprint, Jixian
people began to actively use and adapt their natural environment, cultural heritage relics, and traditional agricultural resources to develop a modern tourism industry by which to accelerate local modern economic, social and cultural construction. Through many endeavors, local ecological tourism, heritage tourism, and agricultural tourism have been developed by local government and communities to become a pillar industry in local development. According to Jixian local statistics, in 2006, the number of tourists was 4.8 million and tourism income was 1.5 billion RMB. In 2009, the number of tourists increased to 7.35 million, and tourism income increased to 2.95 billion RMB. In 2011, the number of tourists increased to 10.98 million, and tourism income reached to 4.6 billion RMB (see Chapter 1 endnote 5 for exchange rates between US Dollar and Chinese Yuan). Because of the change of the local economy pattern, local social and cultural life has also been accordingly transformed. This research shows that in Jixian local modernization development, cultural tradition, and heritage have played a significant role in accelerating local modernization. Processing tradition at the local level has incorporated into the national social and economic developmental plans. In the process, local agencies and ordinary individuals are either powerful or show self-restraint in responding the state’s guidelines and have wisely used their own strategies to negotiate the conflicts between traditional life and modern life. They have been aware that tradition is not something only belonging to the past and displayed in museums. Tradition is the treasure for them to use to build today and tomorrow’s life. They creatively find ways to utilize, adapt, and invent traditions in modern constructions and make tradition modern so as to serve contemporary social needs.

The Jixian phenomenon is not unique, but very common in contemporary China. In this research, I attempt to use this Jixian case to refract a general social phenomenon in China and to approach a theoretical understanding of the relationship of tradition and modernity with a
correction to the view of contrasting tradition and modernity. Based on my ethnographic findings in Jixian, I argue that tradition is alive in the modern construction. Tradition and modernization are not a pair of rivals but co-constitutive aspects of the common process of social change. Tradition contributes to modernization with its unique powers and values, whereas modernization revitalizes tradition with new values and functions. Authentic tradition is tradition through social process. In the course of local cultural tourism development, local tradition and heritage are negotiated and integrated into modern construction. In the context of contemporary China, cultural tourism and local economic development work dynamically in promoting local cultural preservation and invention. State, local agencies, communities, and individuals all play a role in the processes of tradition and modernization. The Jixian case demonstrates that developing a cooperative power relation rather than top-down enforcement in the processes of cultural preservation and development could produce a more sustainable outcome.

Theoretical Review of “Tradition”

As a student in the discipline of folklore and cultural study, I set my theoretical focus for this research on the continuity and creativity of cultural tradition and the values of applications of tradition in the construction of contemporary social life. To establish a theoretical foundation for this research, I would first like to give a brief review of scholarship on the concept of “tradition” in the historical discourse, which demonstrates a recent tendency based on the debates and studies on tradition and modernity in the disciplines of folklore and cultural anthropology. I will also highlight the influential literature on the topic of Chinese tradition and modernity before I set out on my journey to explore the processes of tradition in the contemporary context of Jixian, China.
Defining and Redefining “Tradition”

The term “tradition” continues to be defined and redefined, and to be interpreted and reinterpreted, in correspondence to the development of our knowledge of the world and our recognition of the creation and continuity of human cultures. Looking at history, scholars used to define tradition within certain temporal frames from which the concept of tradition gains meaning. One way sees the temporal concept of tradition in the “past” category, related to “old,” “origin,” opposite “present,” and “modern.” According to Handler and Linnekin’s description, nineteenth-century concepts of tradition and traditional society, used (whether as ideal types or as empirical generalizations) as a baseline against which to understand social change and “modern society,” were embodied in such ideas as Durkheim’s mechanical and organic solidarity, and, in the twentieth century, Sapir’s genuine and spurious culture and Redfield’s folk-urban continuum (Handler and Linnekin 1984: 274).

Another way sees the temporal concept of tradition as a process of handing down, or intergenerational transmission. In American anthropology, A.L. Kroeber’s classic definition of tradition is the “internal handing on through time” of culture traits (Kroeber 1948:411). According to Richard Bauman, “tradition” is defined in its most general usage as “the element of historical continuity or social inheritance in culture, or the social process by which such continuity is achieved” (Bauman 2001: 15819). Bauman explains the temporal concept of tradition as “the process of transmission of an isolable cultural element through time and also the elements themselves that are transmitted in this process. To view an item of folklore as traditional is to see it as having temporal continuity, rooted in the past but persisting into the present in the manner of a natural object” (Bauman 1992: 31). He also explains, “the temporal continuity of tradition is instantiated in successive enactments of cultural forms that are guided
by precedent and convention and construed as replicating, in some essential sense, what has been done before” (Bauman 2001: 15819). In this temporal mode, tradition connects the past to the present through transmission and repetition. Chinese scholar Pang Pu proposes a view of tradition by distinguishing the two concepts of traditional culture and cultural tradition. In his view, traditional culture presents the past in both substance and spirit, whereas cultural tradition is the immortal collective national spirit transmitted beyond a temporal frame (Pang 2003: 9).

A more progressive perspective sees tradition as the temporal concept in a process of continually changing and inventing, producing the future from the past. This idea is promulgated by Henry Glassie. Henry Glassie states that tradition can “be understood as a process of cultural construction,” and it “is a temporal concept, inherently tangled with the past, the future, with history” (Glassie 1995: 398; 399). He suggests, “Tradition is the means for deriving the future from the past,” and “As resource and process, as wish for stability, progress, or revitalization, tradition is the inbuilt motive force of culture” (Glassie 1995: 395). Edward Shils presents his view that tradition changes continually, “They change in the process of transmission as interpretations are made of the tradition presented” (Shils 1981:13). Handler and Linnekin argue, “The past is always constructed in the present” (Handler and Linnekin 1984: 274). From this view, continuity and creativity are part of the same temporal process of tradition. Richard Bauman comments that tradition so re-conceptualized is seen as a selective, interpretive construction, the social and symbolic creation of a connection between aspects of the present and an interpretation of the past (Bauman 1992: 32).

From the fieldwork dealing with the selected objects of tradition, in general, early studies of the stuff of traditions were tied to survivals among the illiterate peasantry and were set in opposition to modern creations. Thus, without introducing the new temporal concept of
“tradition,” scholars’ research and practices on tradition were self-constrained. When new voices argued for the application of tradition to contemporary social life in the 1960s and 1970s, the values of such applications were differently measured. The passive concern was whether or not this kind of application would deteriorate the value and authenticity of folk tradition. For instance, Richard Dorson warned of the danger of the fabrication of traditions for financial gain (Dorson 1976: 5; Jones 1994: 10). In opposite direction, advocators who acclaimed applications of folklore tradition in the construction of contemporary social life held a positive tone. Dell Hymes addresses the notion of seeing tradition not in time, but in social life (Hymes 1975:353). Michael Jones praises applied folklore traditions that “provide information, the formulation of policy, or the initiation of direct action in order to produce change or stability in behavior, culture, or the circumstances of people’s lives including environment and technology” (Jones 1994: 13). Raymond Williams (Williams 1977: 115) emphasizes tradition as “an aspect of contemporary social and cultural organization” and “a particular contemporary cultural practice.” For Williams, “this tradition is articulated and defined according to its loss under the wheels of contemporary change” (Oakes 1998: 29).

The notion of “authenticity of tradition” has also been approached in historical progress. Should folk tradition be viewed only as an old fossil in its original form and context, or can folk tradition be integrated into the contemporary world through reproduction, representation, and invention? Controversy views have arisen in this discourse. Feng Jicai argues that authentic tradition and its historical values should be kept in their original form and that the remaking of cultural objects ruins cultural authenticity (Feng 2007). From a different view, to confine authenticity to the originals is overly simplistic. There is no absolute point of origin; nor is anything static; rather, things constantly change (Bruner 1994; Wang 1999). Authentic tradition
lives in the interaction of continuity and individual creativity. “Tradition would be construed as a vehicle to authenticity, a means for achieving at once individual and social success” (Glassie 1995: 400). To paraphrase Regina Bendix, if expressive culture lives in the fleeting moment of enactment, then authenticity should be recognized as experiential, rather than static and lasting (Bendix 1997: 198). Richard Bauman points to the re-conceptualized tradition as the continuity of creation and interpretively assigned meaning and the use of tradition as a mechanism of social control, the modern construction of invented traditions (Bauman 1992: 32). Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett presents her perspective on “staging culture,” such as festivals, artifacts, songs, dances, and ritual practices that have been selectively used and performed as tourist attractions, and she suggests that authentic tradition is transposed into constructive tradition. She indicates that the conflicts between authenticity and re-creation, between folklore professionals and the tourism industry, “offer different approaches to the marking of authenticity” (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998: 73). These approaches commonly express that genuine tradition is not static but exists as a continuous process in the construction of contemporary social life.

Handler and Linnekin, in their influential article “Tradition, Genuine or Spurious,” present a new thought that traditions are neither genuine nor spurious. Tradition is a symbolic process: “traditional” is not an objective property of phenomena but an assigned meaning. In other words, tradition is not a bounded entity made up of bounded constituent parts, but a process of interpretation, attributing meaning in the present through making reference to the past (Handler 1984: 286-287). From this perspective, they argue that if genuine tradition refers to the pristine and immutable heritage of the past, then all genuine traditions are spurious. Nevertheless, if tradition is always defined in the present, then all spurious traditions are genuine (Handler 1984: 288). This perspective, raised in1980s, undoubtedly reoriented our thinking about the concept of
genuine tradition. Holding on to a similar position, Wood points out that: “What is traditional in
culture, the specification of links between an invented present and an imagined past, is constantly
being symbolically recreated and contested. There is no objective, bounded thing that we can
identify as ‘traditional culture’ against which to measure and judge change. What is defined as
traditional culture, both for the past and for the present, is constantly being reformulated” (Wood
1993: 58). Woods also elaborates: “Not tradition but its on-going symbolic reconstruction; not
authenticity but its attribution; not inherited identities but relational, improvised and contested
ones; not internalized values as much as available templates and strategies of action; not culture
but cultural invention and local discourses – the central questions to be asked are about process”
(Wood 1993: 66). In general, these views refresh our conception of tradition in terms of invention
and development. While I acclaim the evolving of the concept of tradition and the idea of viewing
tradition as continual, contemporary re-creation, in this research, arguing with Pang Pu and
Handler’s views of tradition symbolically and spiritually, I take a position that tradition can be as
aspect of both objects and symbols, materials and spirits by means of objectivity and subjectivity.
Both of them should be viewed as in a process model in cope with the changes of social life.

**Tradition and Modernity**

The definition of tradition, to a large extent, is bound up with the concept of “modernity.”
Modernity (in Chinese *xian dai*, 现代) is a concept that arose from the industrialization and
urbanization era of the world. Modernity embraces modern ideas, modern style, and modern
social structure. It has been commonly seen as a temporal concept in reference to tradition and a
revolution of tradition. Ideas about the relationship between tradition and modernity, as we have
seen from the historical discourse about the conception of “tradition,” have also been defined and
redefined alongside social and theoretical development. In this debate, a conservative view sees
modernity as the enemy of tradition. Modernity endangers tradition, declines tradition, and destroys tradition. The other view is that modernity cannot exist without the existence of tradition. This view is, as Lowenthal argues, that we cannot function without familiar environments and links with a recognizable past, which we are paralyzed unless we transform or replace inherited relics (Lowenthal 1985: 69). The more progressive opinion uses formula to define modernity and tradition and sees the two in a recycle and reconstruction process. Tim Oakes gives his interpretation of tradition and modernity as the following:

Modernity, it was suggested earlier, is an experience that enables a distanced objectivity with which to perceive a new landscape fragmented by the forces of rapid socio-economic, political, and cultural changes, thus engendering aesthetics of loss and an ironic wariness of change. Modernity drives people to grapple with the paradoxical desire to reclaim a sense of continuity with the past even as the social conditions which allow one to imagine such continuity deny the very possibility of its return (Oakes 1998: 58).

These theoretical interpretations of the conceptions of tradition and modernity reveal that, in our theoretical progress, the views of “tradition” and “modernity” have developed from a kind of paradoxical relationship to an integrated relationship. As Tim Oakes notes, the replaying of an old tradition is also a staging of modernity, in which all the contradictions of a new political and economic order were served up for interpretation, understanding, and ultimately reclamation (Oakes 1998: 6-7). These views provide a theoretical inspiration for me to observe and interpret the phenomena of tradition and modernization in Jixian.

**Debates about Chinese Tradition and Modernity**

In Chinese intellectual history, in pursuit of modernizing China, “tradition” (in Chinese, chuan tong 传统), and “culture” (wen hua 文化) have been hot topics under debate. The discourse has overlapped with the debates about the relationship of Chinese culture and Western culture. In a common view, modern Western culture is generated by modern industrial
civilization and is the model of modernity, whereas tradition means old, indigenous, Chinese culture. In the late nineteenth century, Western powers invaded China. The Qing dynasty failed to defend against invaders and protect the nation, so it urged intellectuals to rethink the causes of China’s weakness and to seek a change in China through changing the old social system and culture. They agitated for modern culture, science, technology, and democracy based on Western civilization. Since then, the binary concepts of “tradition” and “modernity” have been politically and theoretically established, and the questions of how to treat Chinese tradition and how to establish modern China have been under debate among Chinese intellectuals.

In general, there are two extreme anti-tradition movements in politics and ideology standing out from twentieth-century Chinese history. One is the May Fourth New Cultural movement in the first quarter of the twentieth century, after the collapse of the Qing Dynasty. During this period, intellectuals advocated the abandonment of the old traditions to make a thorough change to Chinese society. They acclaimed Western science and democracy as the instruments necessary to change Chinese society and the culture of federalism. Sun Zhongshan and Lu Xun were the prominent figures among them. Sun introduced Western social system and led the 1911 revolution to overturn the two thousand-year-old imperial system. Lu Xun, in his writings, sharply attacked the traditional Confucian culture as a killer of Chinese human nature. In this anti-tradition movement, tradition was politically treated as the opposite of modernity. To establish modernity in China meant to destroy and change the old traditions in terms of ideology, social institutions, and cultural customs. Another extreme anti-tradition movement was the Cultural Revolution, which happened from 1966 to 1976. During the Cultural Revolution, the old traditional cultural objects, ideologies, and activities were prohibited or destroyed. Different from the May Forth Movement in the earlier twentieth century, the Cultural Revolution opposed
not only old traditions, but also Western culture and capitalism. It was a political campaign rather than a pure cultural movement, as it was called a super-structure campaign. In these two extreme anti-tradition social movements, ordinary people were driven by political elites, and traditional culture was politically defined as the opposite of modern construction.

Besides these extreme anti-traditional cultural movements tangling with the political and ideological campaigns, another trend approaching the treatment of traditional culture and modern construction of China was also observed during twentieth-century China. In this trend, academic intellectuals studied the foundation of Chinese tradition and interpreted the relationship of tradition and modernity in terms of economic base and social life. They stressed the change of old Chinese culture and society via reforms of its economic institutions and social structure. For instance, in a debate about the relationship of traditional Chinese culture and Western culture in the 1930s, well-known Chinese scholar Liang Suming argued that the Chinese culture dominated by agriculture and rural culture, should encounter the western industry and urban culture. Thus, a new culture would be transformed from old culture, from rural life, to construct a new state (Lu 2007: 96).

Another famous Chinese sociologist, Fei Xiaotong (Fei Hsiao Tung), proposed the influential concept known as “Earthbound China” (Xiang tu Zhongguo) in his works. He used this concept to strike upon the essence of Chinese culture and tradition. His theory has had a profound influence on the study of Chinese culture and society. As a Western-trained Chinese scholar, Fei Xiaotong followed Malinowski to study anthropology at the London School of Economics in the 1930s. His doctoral dissertation, Peasant Life in China, became a most influential work, and he became a prominent figure in the fields of Chinese cultural anthropology and sociology (Fei 1983: 8). Fei analyzed Chinese society by looking at the peasant village of
Kaixian’ Gong in southern China. He claims, “I started to scrutinize society objectively and constantly pried into the reasons for conventionally accepted values and social phenomena, hope to discover a universal law underlying them all” (Fei 1983: 2). He studied Kaixian’ Gong diachronically and engaged in ethnographic field investigations in different time periods: his first visit in 1936 produced Peasant Life in China, and his second visit in 1957 led to Kaixian’ Gong Revisited. His third visit in 1981 provided material for the publication Present Day Kaixian’ Gong. From his studies, he became convinced that things change and develop in accordance with their respective laws. Each nation has its own social customs and norms, which appear natural and commonplace to its own people but are in fact the inevitable results of its specific social conditions. In his view, Chinese tradition and value derive from a peasant society. To account for modern changes, he states, “The economic and political pressure of the Western powers is the prime factor in the present change of Chinese culture” (Fei 1983: 16).

On the other hand, Fei Xiaotong insists, “Traditional China has not passed. It is present, although in many respects it has been covered by modifications and by novelties.” As he explains, “The new order will not come all of a sudden and be built all in a twinkling. It will be born from the old through the gradual change of the habitual way of living of the millions” (Fei 1983: 146). He asserts that the Western influence to the changes of China should be examined at levels, from economic activities to the social structure. “Modernization is imposed on the Chinese by the machine age, and China is forced to enter the world community. Hence the change is in the Chinese social structure” (Fei 1983: 146). He indicates, “The contact of the East and the West is not a matter of geography but a matter of economics. Modern industry gives the West a power unprecedented in history over agrarian communities. Unlike an age of agriculture when people can live harmlessly alone, the industrial age is an age of expansion, a lure to a
world community” (Fei 1983: 147). In general, Fei Xiaotong’s ideas on Chinese tradition and modernity can be summarized with the following three points: First, earth-bound China is the essence of Chinese culture; second, the transformation of Chinese culture from a traditional culture to modern culture was caused by changing economic patterns and social structure; third, tradition and modernity have an internal connection. The new is born from the old.

Fei Xiaotong’s idea of seeing economic patterns and social institutions as the cause of the changes to tradition can also be found in the works of American scholar Myron Cohen. Cohen has engaged his study in major dimensions of Chinese culture and society and has focused on pre-modern Chinese tradition and modern changes. He had conducted his fieldwork in China from the 1960s to the 1990s. The dominant theme in his research is the relationship between late imperial (sometimes referred to as “late traditional”) and contemporary culture and society in China. He indicates that, since the mid-nineteenth-century, China has experienced a process of change in response to the new outside forces of Western powers, one that was to intensify throughout the twentieth century. With rapid change impacting all of China’s population continuing to the present, late imperial culture remains one of the major constitutive elements in the process of change itself (Cohen 2005: 1). Cohen’s study of the process of change stresses that “the entire process involved ongoing interaction between old and new elements rather than the former simply giving way to the latter” (Cohen 2005: 9). He approaches the study of Chinese tradition with a focus on the “economic culture” of late traditional society as a whole. He explains that his research “denies the salience of the peasant versus non-peasant cultural and functional distinctions, thus placing the appraisal of China’s heritage for modernization precisely in the late imperial context of rural urban interpenetration and integration” (Cohen 2005:70). Cohen’s approach, like that of Fei Xiaotong, shows anthropological scholarly endeavours. He
emphasizes the economic pattern of a society as the crucial factor driving the whole change of culture and society. Fei Xiaotong and Myron Cohen both paid attention to tradition and modernity at the level of social economics and in the course of historical process. But Cohen, rather than view tradition and modernity as Fei Xiaotong does—as a chain from the former to the latter—or view them as two separate things, emphasizes an integration of tradition and modernity.

In addition, Cohen’s anthropological approach also addresses the social gap in the transformation of Chinese tradition to modernity, a gap between ordinary people and political elite. Myron Cohen points out that the absence of cultural links between China’s general population and its political elites at all levels of government and party organization has led to the ironic consequence that the state has had little or no success in realizing its ideological or cultural goals. No effort has been made to introduce or negotiate cultural change within a framework of common understanding (Cohen 2005: 56). He also indicates that in recent years there are signs of a reemerging cultural consensus, involving elements deriving from late imperial culture as well as cultural patterns, some linked to the appearance of a consumer-oriented mass society. But it remains to be seen if or how these new elements in Chinese culture will be used to bridge the gap between ordinary people and the state (Cohen 2005: 40). Cohen’s “gap” theory can be a key to comprehending Chinese cultural history. The gap between upper culture and lower culture, elite and ordinary people, has been interpreted by scholars Leon Stover and Takeko Stover from another point of view. They apply Robert Redfield’s method of dichotomizing the old agrarian states into great and little traditions to analyze Chinese culture, and they positively indicate that the two cultural subsystems of peasantry and elite Chinese tradition survive into the twentieth century with their great and little traditions intact (Stover 1976: 5).
These insightful views shed light on today’s discussion of Chinese tradition and modernity. In particular, the twentieth century anthropological approaches have appealed to contemporary scholars. Since the issue of tradition and modernity has become more striking nowadays in China, a re-examination of the relationship between tradition and modernization, and the roles played by state elites and ordinary people in the treatment of tradition, actually is an imperative and meaningful research objective, not only for enriching the academy, but also for solving current social conflicts and issues.

**Contemporary Issues of Tradition and Modernization in China**

To recount the clash of tradition and modernity in Chinese society, although it can be traced back to more than one hundred years ago from the collapse of the Qing dynasty and the establishment of the new social system of the Republics in the earlier of the twentieth century, this research attempts to focus on exploring tradition and modernity in the context of contemporary China. The issue of tradition and modernity in contemporary China shows two particular features: 1) the “reforming and opening” policy and modernization movement in China since the 1980s have coincided with the dramatic change of the pattern of world economy and technology. China has deeply involved in the globalization process. Because of this worldwide trend, Chinese tradition has been experiencing new challenges and transformations. 2) The early twentieth century is the first time in modern China that the state has emphasized economic development and modernization as the central task of the nation. In the move toward modernization in China in the twentieth century, tradition is mainly treated at the level of politics and cultural ideology and is driven by national elites. The traditional agricultural economic pattern still remained in large in rural China. As a result, “a culture retains its identity even as it
undergoes deep historical transformations” (Duara 1988: 265). However, in contemporary China, modern economic development has swept from urban to rural, due to connections with the world economy, technology and culture, and the nation-wide modernization movement. Thus, the issue of tradition and modernity is no longer just a cultural and political issue, but is a social and economic issue as well. It penetrates to the common people’s daily life in depth and width and has influenced the state policies, ordinary people’s security, and infrastructure of the state. The social forces, from state and elites to local communities and ordinary people, have all faced the problem of how to deal with tradition in the modernization process from their respective positions. Thus, I would say that tradition within modernization is a critical issue beyond culture and a meaningful practical research object. Below I will provide a general view of the contemporary issues of tradition and modernity in the course of China’s modernization.

In contemporary China, the most important year was 1978, and the most important event is the establishment of the new national policy of the “reforming and opening” with the goal of achieving the four modernizations in industry, agriculture, science and technology, and national defense. Starting from this historical point, modernization and economic development have been taken up as a central task in the national policymaking and local implementation. China has been speeding up its economic development and social reformation. In the course of modernization in the new era, tradition once again has become a subject and fallen in a contradictory situation. On the one hand, there is a popular wave of reviving traditional cultures. Tradition was conceptually re-esteemed and re-examined in connection with the modernization construction. On the state level, tradition has been politically liberated and redefined in terms of national root and cultural heritage by which was strengthened the union and uniqueness of the nation in the world. Traditional cultures have been utilized as kind of cultural capital to bolster nationalism, to attract
oversea investment, and to promote economic development. On the local level of economic development and social construction, local tradition and heritage have been used to build unique local cultural characteristics and identities, to attract investments from the outside world, and to accelerate local economic growth. From this aspect, tradition has been multi-functionally involved in modern constructions politically, economically, and culturally. Traditional culture from objects to symbols has been given attention and signified in various occasions nationwide during the past thirty years. On the other hand, Chinese tradition has also encountered an unprecedented crisis and is in a danger due to modernization and globalization processes and fast economic development. As the state facilitates its developmental goals for modernization, while China has simultaneously escalated its economic power in the world, more and more old objects and cultural practices have been quickly disappearing or only exist as a kind of symbol. Meanwhile, reconstructed and innovated local traditions are commonly seen. Conflicts over the clash of tradition and modernization have become tense.

The most visible impact on traditional culture in China in recent decades comes from the large-scale urbanization in the process of modernization. This is a no precedent for this movement in Chinese history. Large amounts of rural lands have been gobbled by the fast expansion of urban construction during the past thirty years. Urban industries get cheaper land, labor, and raw material in the countryside, whereas rural populations surged into cities to seek the dream of urban life and to earn fast cash to send home. In this interactive process, cultural dissimilation and assimilation, confliction and negotiation, hegemony and harmony can commonly be observed. Urban life styles as well foreign cultures have influenced every aspect of the old rural life patterns, from dwellings and family relationships to entertainment and consumption, especially for young generations. Numerous old objects and old skills have
vanished forever. These phenomena have caused puzzles, anxieties, and inquiries among various social groups in China.

Another significant factor should be mentioned here: In contemporary China, since the essential social system and structure still remain under a central collective authority system, the power structure of the nation has granted the central government a unique role in operating social development plans. In this hierarchic social system, local developments are commonly intertwined with the state’s political and economic goals. Thus, from the central government to the basic social unit of the village, power relations have been very complicated. Different levels of organization—state political guidelines, local agencies, and ordinary people’s practices—have related as models of cooperation, contestation, or even resistance. A real incident described below illustrates this common situation in contemporary China.

On September 6, 2011, a meeting was held at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing for the sixtieth anniversary celebration of the Central Research Institute of Culture and History (Zhong yang wen shi guan). At this meeting, Feng Jicai, the Chairman of Chinese Folk Culture and Art Association, reported to the former Prime Minister Wen Jiabao about the imperative situation of cultural traditions in the urbanization process of China. The content of this conversation was released by CCTV and the Xin Hua News Agency on the same day. In the conversation, Feng Jicai urged the preserving endangered cultural heritages. He commented that the survival of thousands of the ancient villages, which had five thousand years of history, has come to a critical moment. “The ancient villages now have unprecedentedly been quick disappeared. Either they are destroyed in the developing process, or they are changed beyond recognition because people do not comply with the law, but take immediate, utilitarian stance. The authentic ancient village becomes a kind of fake ancient village. How to ensure that the
urbanization movement does not damage Chinese cultural heritage is a major cultural problem we face.” Former Prime Minster Wen Jiabao admitted that problems occurred in the implementation of authority and responded with a call for attention to the issue of protecting tangible heritage, intangible heritage, and cultural traditions in the course of industrialization and urbanization. He said, “It now happens in some places, regardless of the legitimate rights and interests of farmers. Farmers are given a compulsory relocation to catch up with construction; the losing is not only the ancient village, but also modern rural landscape. Farmers lose their land. This thing is far more than the protection of culture.” He also points out, “Since founding the new China, a deep lesson for us is that a large number of really tangible heritages were demolished, and then we spend a lot of money to build a lot of fake stuff.” He remarked that this issue deserves our close attention.7

This incident manifests that the conflicts of tradition and modernity, preservation and development, local life and state goals, have been very stressful in contemporary China. How to view and resolve the conflicts depends on how to conceptualize the nature of tradition and how to evaluate the phenomena of reproduction of tradition and invention of tradition in a modern environment. Feng Jicai, as an active leader of the cultural preservation programs in contemporary China, represents a large group of contemporary Chinese cultural elite with deep concerns about the dangerous situation of traditional culture in contemporary modernization, but his viewpoint somewhat deviates from the social reality and local practices. In this research, I will use the Jixian case in dialogue with Feng Jicai’s argument.

From the perspective of cultural preservation, to deal with the danger of fast disappearance of traditional culture, the state of China has continuously taken action. Especially since the 2000s, some important cultural protection laws have been made or updated, and some
huge cultural preservation projects have been carried out. In 1982, “China’s Cultural Relics Protection Law” was passed, and it has been revised twice, in 1991 and 2007. On July 1, 2003, the regulation for the enforcement of the law was also carried out. On January 10, 2003, a nation-wide “Chinese Folk Cultural Heritage Preservation Project” launched and planned to spend ten years to conduct a blanket investigation, collecting and recording video-audio of traditional Chinese folklore, folk literature, and folk arts (Feng 2007: 30-40). In August 2004, China joined the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage. In December 2005, the central government of China issued a national Cultural Heritage Day, which is annually held on the second Saturday in June. On June 10, 2006, China held the first Cultural Heritage Day. In 2008, the Chinese government set up “The Regulations for Protecting Important Historical Cultural Cities, Towns, and Villages.” On June 1, 2011, “The Law of Intangible Cultural Heritage of the People’s Republic of China” was carried out. Up to 2011, “The Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage” on national level of China had registered as many as 1219 titles. These events deliver the important message that cultural preservation has been highly considered in contemporary China, along with its speedy modernization process.

However, concerns have also been raised. While seeking to protect historic cultural heritages in the nation, how should we treat the continuity and change of tradition in our real life world in the modernization process? Should we deny it, criticize it, or accept it in an appropriate way? And how should we think of authenticity and value of tradition? Should we just value it as an antique in history, or should we think it as a powerful dynamic in building modern social life and serving contemporary social desires. These questions relate to how we consider cultural
preservation and development. This research set out with these concerns to explore the nature and dynamics of tradition and the relationship of tradition and modern construction.

**Reflections of Chinese Folklorists**

Chinese folklorists have been active members in preserving, collecting, recording, and studying Chinese cultural traditions from oral tradition to traditional customs since the early twentieth century. In the last hundred year of historic progress, Chinese folklore studies have been closely related to modern political movements. Chinese folklorists have a passion to study folk culture, but they themselves are actually from an elite group and have a western and classic Chinese education background. Thus, in their studying of folk culture, they distinguish themselves from their research objects. They focus their studies on illiterate people’s oral tradition and lower class people’s cultural practices in the past. This situation remained until the 1990s. The researchers placed themselves as outsiders of folk culture to find, to learn, to collect, and to study folk cultures. To avoid distorting folk products when working with, collecting, and archiving folk materials, conventionally Chinese folklorists abide by the rule of “faithfully record and carefully sort out.” With this tradition, Chinese folklore scholarship places stress on keeping and protecting old traditions without revising them. This ideal has been carried into contemporary Chinese folklore studies, although the scope of folklore studies has extended from recording and interpreting the old oral traditions and old folk customs to the broader study of contemporary folk cultural phenomena and cultural issues, and to participate in preserving cultural tradition. In the following, I give a brief review on the historic connections of Chinese folklore scholarship.
In the early twentieth century, to support the May 4 New Culture Movement, intellectuals who had both Western and Chinese education backgrounds sought a new identity for Chinese culture and took inspiration from folk society. In this movement, folksong and folktales were seen as fresh elements and dynamic sources for developing modern Chinese literature. The “Going to the People” movement and the Folk-Literature movement were taking place. A folk song collection bureau at Peking University was established in 1918 and began the publication *Folksong Periodical* in 1920. In 1927, the Folklore Society was established in Guangzhou and had its own publication, *Folklore Periodical*, which published 123 volumes from 1928 to 1933 with an emphasis on old customs and folk literature studies. From 1949 to 1979, dominated by socialist political ideology, folklore studies was limited to studying folk literature—“labor people’s oral production”—from a political and aesthetic view. Along with the political climate change and the recovering of the social sciences and humanities, in 1983, the Chinese Folklore Society was formally set up. Chinese folklore became independent from the field of Chinese folk literature. This new orientation changed a longstanding practice from the narrow scope of folk literature studies to the broader subject of folk life and cultural traditions. However, the working principle still is set as “faithfully record and carefully sort out (忠实记录，慎重整理.)” In this period, describing old cultural phenomena, compiling collected materials, studying history, and publishing research reports on oral traditions and folk customs dominated the field. Thus, Chinese folklorists historically played the role of safeguarding and interpreting the old folk tradition from the past. Folk literature was defined as illiterate people’s products, collective products. Like a taboo, “individual creation” and “framing tradition” were absent from folklore studies.
In the new century era, globalization has not only changed the global economy and cultural landscape, but has also changed the way of international interaction and the way of academic research. In these circumstances, Chinese folklorists participate in preserving China’s intangible cultural heritage projects in collaboration with UNESCO cultural heritage preservation actions, and take responsibility for consulting, evaluating, collecting, archiving, and for public education. Chinese folklore studies opened up discussions about the issues of national intangible culture preservation in the rapid modernization process in China, to seek how to preserve tradition and how to deal with commodification of cultural products. Nowadays, the term “intangible cultural heritage” often substitutes for “folk literature,” “folklore,” and “oral traditions.” Ethnographic studies have been applied in Chinese folklore studies and changed the fashion of text-based studies of old oral traditions and old customs. However facing the loss and transformation of various cultural traditions in complex contemporary social settings, the principles of the folklore field from the last century still influence today’s views of the issue of preserving cultural tradition amid modernization.

A strong voice from Chinese folklore scholarship emphasizes the protection of tradition, but holds a negative attitude to the purpose-oriented development of tradition. Chinese folklorists are seriously concerned with the loss of old traditions in the modernization process, so they argue that the key to preventing the loss and to preserving the old tradition is to act to save authentic tradition (本真性). Changes and updates of modern elements in tradition could destroy the authenticity of tradition. The leading figures in contemporary Chinese folklore study—Feng Jicai, Liu Kuili, and Liu Xicheng—all have stated this position. For instance, Feng Jicai has reiterated his position in his speeches and writings that historical cultures should be allowed to remained in their original form to maintain their historic value. He criticizes the reproduced and
innovated cultural traditions that have occurred in contemporary cultural economic activities as fake cultures losing the historic value of cultural heritage (Feng 2007). Liu Xicheng’s article “The Industrialization of Intangible Cultural Heritage, a Questionable Argument” indicates that the industrialization of intangible cultural heritage is different from commercialization of intangible cultural heritage. He is against the latter, but even though he is for the former, he still stresses that keeping the original core techniques and original cultural value as a whole is essential (技艺的本真性，完整性和固有的文化内涵) (Liu 2010). This view sees preservation and development in a contradictory relation. Liu insists that preserving and developing are two separate things and they should be dealt with separately. Preserving should stress authentic protection and continuity (原汁原味地保护和传承). Developmental processing of tradition will inevitably change or damage the original form. From this point of view, commercialized folklore activities such as folklore performance and folklore tourism are negatively evaluated.

Liu Kuili, the former president of the Chinese Folklore Society, in his talk “Worries: Does Our Way of Life still Exist?” states that folklore tourism is beneficial for improving local people’s lives and for satisfying tourists’ curious demands, but destroys local folk life. Hotels, restaurants, and souvenirs are not folklore, but commercial goods. Folklore displays and performances split folklore from real life, change the function of folklore, and empty the value of tradition. Another concern among Chinese folklorists is about the role government plays in cultural preservation process. While considering the government to have an active role in policymaking and financial investment, Chinese scholars argue that government should be the supporter rather than the main body in the engagement of cultural protection, and they should not over-interfere local cultural engagement (Huang 2014).
The above views are mainly expressed by scholars and cultural elites based on their understanding to cultural tradition and their thinking about the way that tradition should be kept. In the post-modern era, along with the end of isolation among cultural groups and social classes, in a new era of social and cultural practices, old culture and modern culture, official culture and folk culture, spiritual culture and material culture, urban culture and rural culture are merging and interacting each other. Culture is deconstructed and reconstructed based on various cultural and social influences from inside and outside, and incorporating the past and the modern.

Retaining a pure original form and content of a tradition, without updating any modern elements, is actually a utopic thought. Even people who make efforts of preserving the original form of traditions still give evidence of contemporary motivations, techniques, and working forces. Thus, my question in this research holds that there is a gap between the view of a cultural scholar and the view of a cultural practitioner. In “The Industrialization of Intangible Cultural Heritage, a Questionable Argument,” Liu Xicheng admits that there two different attitudes toward the industrialization of the intangible cultural heritage. Generally, approvers are those from local government, agencies and engagers; disapprovers are cultural scholars (Liu 2010: 1).

In my research, I also find that local cultural holders and practitioners have their own favorite way of treating their traditions based on their own personal experience and social needs. The traditional house provides an example. The old people like to stay in their flat stone house and sleep on the mud kang; the farmers running farmer’s guesthouses like to build brick houses and use soft beds. In the Chinese cultural scholars’ view I mentioned, using brick houses and soft beds means the loss of local tradition and the emptying of traditional values. Should local people follow scholars’ advice to protect tradition for tradition’s sake? Should they maintain tradition or change tradition based on their own choice, their life needs and inclinations? From my research,
I want to argue that the decision maker should be the cultural practitioners, not scholars. People create, use, and change their culture. They are the real cultural owners and they determine how their tradition should be. The social responsibility of a cultural scholar is to study what people do and why they do it, and to increase people’s awareness of their need to protect their culture through education, but not just to comment on what people should do and what they should not do with tradition, from an outsider’s perspective, not from an insiders’ actual life situation. I observed that recently, there has been an increase in voices speaking for the cultural practitioners based on the real world situation and local practices, rather than from a preconceived, outsider viewpoint. The voices in this trend show an open mind toward the modernized tradition, performed tradition, folklore tourism, and economic culture. I will discuss this trend further in chapter 4. From a general viewpoint, Chinese folklorists have delivered a stronger voice for protection of authentic Chinese tradition and intangible cultural heritage, but a weaker voice and fewer studies on developing modern tradition. Negative attitudes to the modernized tradition dominate in the discipline. While some scholars claim that heritage owners are the main body of cultural preservation, they likely use their scholar’s perspective to speak for the cultural practitioners rather than deliver cultural practitioners’ own voices. This research attempts to explore local cultural practitioners’ actual situations in processing tradition and practicing culture in their particular lives to make arguments about the relationship of tradition and modernization and the definition of authentic tradition and modern tradition.

**Research Objectives**

In coping with the critical issue of tradition and modernization in contemporary China I described above, I set out to conduct an ethnographic study in Jixian to find out about social
realities related to processing tradition in contemporary China. I attempt to obtain a new understanding of the modernized tradition, which differs from old tradition through reconstructing, updating, being integrated into contemporary social and economic life in general. I also attempt to inquire into the roles and power relationships among state, local agencies, and ordinary people in this process. I explore individuals’ life stories and feelings about the cultural and social changes in the transformation of China. Jixian in this research is a mini sample of China.

Figure 1.1 Location of Jixian. Source: Jixian Travel Bureau Website

Jixian is a middle size county affiliated to Tianjin, China, known as “the back garden of Tianjin.” It is geographically located 110 km away from Tianjin city and covers 1590 km² of land. Jixian has mountains, lakes, broad plains, stratified rocks that formed a billion years ago, and thousand-year-old ancient relics. Jixian prides itself on its unique geographical features, long history, and cultural heritage resources. The majority population in Jixian is the Han people.
There are also other 33 minority populations. Agriculture was the main economic pattern in the past. Like elsewhere in China, Jixian has also experienced the radical social movements of the twentieth century. However, the most significant transformation of local culture has been happening in recent decades along with the nationwide economic development and the boom of local tourism.

From the 1980s, in accordance with the “Reform and Opening up” policy and the national modernization goal, and along with change in the national political and economic atmosphere, Jixian’s economy has gone from merely traditional agriculture to including multiple economic sectors. Utilizing local natural and cultural resources to develop modern tourism has been taken as a major strategy of local development in recent decades. Ancient vernacular structures, traditional rural life scenery, folkloric festivals, folk arts, folk villages, and farmer’s guesthouses have all been utilized to promote a newly emergent local cultural tourism industry. As a result, Jixian’s economy has grown quickly and people’s lives have changed greatly. Traditions now have gained new meanings and functions in local modern life. For example, the reconstructed ancient town, such as “the Drum Tower Square,” has been used to provide a cultural atmosphere for local people to amuse, perform, trade, and celebrate festivals, and for visitors to taste unique local cultural style and history. To recover local traditional customs, since 2004, the Dule Temple Fair has been annually held during the Chinese New Year, and a Buddhism ceremony called *Guanyin ci fu* has been performed at the fair, which has become an attractive program for visitors. The tourism development has also strengthened the interaction between urban culture and rural culture. While the old tradition and rural lifestyle especially appeal to urban tourists who search for a connection to the past and a sense of harmony with nature, many local residents have also actually modernized their own lifestyle. Hotels, travel
agencies, banks, shopping malls, commercial companies, entertainment centers, theaters, and restaurants have appeared in town and provide services to locals and tourists alike. Many traditional peasant families make plans to plant special kinds of crops and fruits according to the need of the guesthouse business, farmer’s market, and urban visitors’ taste. As a result, household incomes have commonly increased.

No one has studied the Jixian phenomena I described. Maybe Jixian stories are not unusual in contemporary China. However, Jixian stories dealing with tradition and modernization in local social and economic practices prompt me to speculate about a theoretical question. Should tradition and modernity be defined as a binary concept, a sequential process model of tradition and modernity, or as a different formula? From the Jixian case, drawing on the most recent theories of studying tradition, I attempt to rethink the relation of tradition and modernity from a new angle and give a different interpretation. Jixian stories show that in the particular social context of China, the process of tradition and modernization has encountered new challenges and problems. Locals have applied various strategies to find a way to ease the
tension between tradition and modernity, preservation and modernization, and to balance loss and gain. Through contestation, cooperation, and negotiation, the people of Jixian have simultaneously engaged in the preservation and utilization of tradition and the development of modernization. Based on my field observation and theoretical speculation, I argue that the process of tradition is the process of modernity. Modernity nourishes tradition, invents tradition, and makes tradition meaningful and modern. Standing on this ground, I examine tradition in a process mode. That is, when tradition is utilized, reformulated, adapted and remade, modern tradition is born and new values and functions are created to cope with contemporary social and economic demands. My overarching speculation is that tradition means neither the past nor a cold corpse distanced from the present world. The values, functions, contents, and forms of tradition are selectively inherited, developed, and integrated into the construction of contemporary social life.

For many programs under the title of preserving or recovering traditions that I observed in Jixian, derived from an old concept of authenticity, it is hard to say that these products are authentic or original tradition, either in content or in form. However, to modern people’s eyes, to visitors’ eyes, from the mouths of local tour guide, they are present as local tradition. Thus, viewing tradition as a process, I deem that what I observed is tradition in different versions. Some programs presented as developing local tradition actually do not have a root in local tradition but are new creations of local tradition. I deem that they are the tradition of tomorrow. I prefer to use the term framing tradition to describe these modern adaptions and constructions of tradition. In this research, I question whether people should live with a preserved tradition or develop tradition for the future. How should we evaluate the phenomenon of invention of local cultures by means of engaging economic activities and using local resources? Does this process
produce both positive and negative results? Does tradition become endowed with new values through the process? How do local communities gain power from this process to reframe their cultural values, identities, and life patterns? By exploring these questions, I seek to build up a theoretical frame of the process of tradition and to understand how tradition and modernization, past and present, can be harmonized in a single process in contemporary social construction and modernization.

In the context of China, this process features negotiation and cooperation between the state, local government agencies, and ordinary individuals, and it serves various desires politically, economically, culturally at different levels. Thus, this research also focuses on exploring the relationships of different participants in this process. What role do they respectively play? What problems exist in this social cooperation process? What benefits and losses may each party incur?

At the macro level, a significant characteristic of Jixian locals’ use of tradition to promote local modernization is that various levels of social forces (from local government to local residents and businesses, from the county, township to the village grassroots) have all participated in and played a particular role. The principle operating structure is that of government guidelines: departments collaborate, private organizations and grassroots participate, and they all work together to achieve the local development goals. This operational structure reflects the typical contemporary Chinese characteristic of combining socialism and a market economic system. This model has both advantages and disadvantages. From the aspect of advantages, the government has made general policies, developmental plans, and investments such as projects that restore local cultural relics and develop village cultural projects that emphasize “one village, one particular cultural product” (一村一品) and leisure agriculture and
ecological agriculture tourism. These engagements from the government have encouraged and supported local communities and individuals to utilize local cultural resources (文化利用) and to invent local cultural products (文化创新). The policies have inspired local businesses and individuals with enthusiasm and creativity to become involve in the development. The big projects accomplished in town and in villages in Jixian county would not be possible without the national and local government’s support and financial investments. As a result, local social construction and economy have achieved a fast development, and the common people’s life condition appears to have greatly improved compared with the past situation in Jixian.

However, disadvantages also show up. Under the top-down operation system, local authorities have more power to determine the major developmental plans, which may not fit with various situations of the basic social units and may also negatively affect individuals’ lives. For instance, with a large scale of land reclaim and investment by local authorities and large commercial companies from outside with the purpose of earning profit through developing local tourism facilities, many local farmers have been faced with losing their land, losing their traditional home and occupation, and losing their life skills and basic way of life. They feel panic and worry about their security for the future. In addition, many recovered traditional folk cultural programs face death again because of the challenges of the modern lifestyle. Some cultural programs launched with the advocacy and supervision of local government, such as village craft programs, have come to a premature end. Thus, how local development plans can consider the right and benefit of each party of stakeholders, and how grassroots can have more input at the stage of project planning and decision making to make a real collaboration between top leadership and grassroots in local developments are still urgent issues.
Fieldwork and Methodology

My research subject and fieldwork destination Jixian is a place I have visited many times since the 1980s because my elder sister lives there. As a result, I have witnessed many changes to the place. In the summer of 2008, when I was back in China, I planned a field trip with the interest of observing folk traditions and folk arts in contemporary China. My destination was Gaomi in Shandong province, a place famous for the folk arts of clay sculpture, paper cutting, and pu hui New Year painting, and it is also the hometown of famous Chinese novelist Mo Yan, who won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2012. Since Gaomi was a new place to me, everything seemed strange and felt like a still photograph to me. For instance, an imitation of an ancient street, newly constructed, at the center of downtown was named Suzhou jie, a name borrowed from the famous southern Chinese city of Suzhou. I did not understand why Gaomi imported this name for a local street, rather than using a native name.

On another occasion, when I took a trip to Jixian to visit my elder sister there, from the moment I got dropped off at the bus station, the current scenes before my face seemed strange, and soon they were converted to a series of motion pictures in my head, the past and the present, the unchanged and the changed, the old and the new. In the following several days, I looked around the town. The most famous ancient local building, the Dule Temple, still stood in its original place with an unchanged facade, but it was surrounded by a new wall with a new entrance gate and a new ancient-style street. I remembered how quiet it was in the surrounding area when I rode a bicycle to visit this ancient temple in 1986, I just spent one Yuan to get a ticket to enter the temple at that time. However, on this more recent visit, loud noises from the shops, visitors, and audio broadcasts overwhelmed the street. The price of an entrance ticket to the temple had gone up to 40 Yuan. Although during my re-visiting of China, I saw many similar
landscape constructions in many other places such as Gaomi in Shandong province, it was Jixian that evoked my memories of the past and brought to my mind a vivid linear history with its incredible changes from past to present. From my observations of different places, I want to say that Jixian’s story applies not just to Jixian. It applies to China and the world.

Soon after I came back to school to continue my studies in fall 2008, I took a class about folkloristics in Japan taught by Dr. Michael Foster. The class focused on the theme of tradition and modernity. In this class, I read Marilyn Ivy’s book *Discourses of the Vanishing: Modernity Phantasm Japan*, in which the author recounts Japanese nostalgia and the preservation of cultural tradition as the main theme in the recovery of the past of Tono, a constructed museum-park city, a visual world of the past. At the end of the term, in writing my final essay, I picked up Ivy’s analysis of Tono to make a comparison with Jixian’s situation. In this paper, I argued that for Tono, the reconstruction theme of nostalgia plays a role as the homeland of Japanese that has been lost in the modern city; the homeland of folklore, a symbol of the traditional culture of Japan. For Jixian, reconstruction highlights modernization. The restoration of historical cultural heritage plays an important role in promoting local tourism and economic development. Thus, cultural traditions are reinvented in various social spaces and serve different purposes in contemporary societies. This essay actually is a prelude to my current dissertation research.

Later, when I considered my dissertation topic and wrote my dissertation proposal, I decided to pick Jixian as my research object. By drawing on Jixian’s stories in the transition of China over the course of decades, I expected to get some interesting findings on the issue of tradition and modernity, cultural continuity and change. By taking advantage of modern internet technology, it was possible to do a remote preliminary research on Jixian through online access to the Jixian Travel Bureau website. By searching the site, I got to know the fast growing
tourism industry as well as economic and cultural development progress in Jixian. I narrowed down my research scope to Jixian folklore tourism and hoped that from this I could study how cultural traditions were used in tourism endeavors to promote local economic development and cultural landmarks.

In January 2011, a cold winter right before the Chinese Spring Festival, I came back to Jixian again to conduct my fieldwork investigation with a preliminary research topic of “Tradition in Process: Jixian’s Folklore Tourism in the Course of Modernization of China 1980-2010.” During this long-term stay in Jixian County, I lived in the county and experienced local daily life. I had more chances to get in touch with the local scene: people, town, villages, activities, and landscapes. In my fieldwork, the more I got to know the place, the more I felt I should modify my planned research topic. I found that although tourism has played a very visible role in revealing the interaction of cultural tradition and local modernization, what I was going to study was the fate of tradition in modern society. Tourism is just a window for me to look at tradition in a modern setting. The interesting phenomena I had observed in my fieldwork—from local governance to community endeavors, to the local people’s complex attitudes, feelings, and concerns about the changes to the place and their life situation—definitely went beyond the dimension of tourism and could not be ignored in my research. I decided to base my research on what I had seen and what I had heard on the site in Jixian. As a result of the fieldwork, I revised my dissertation to its current topic: “Tradition in Process: Framing Tradition in Cultural Preservation and Invention in Jixian in the Course of Modernization of China.”

To conduct this research, generally, I combine diachronic and synchronic study engaged in the following: 1) Archival collections. I collected and sorted archival materials from online Jixian resources, the Jixian Travel Bureau website, and the Jixian Library’s local newspaper
collections. I found related sources from news reports, local agency announcements, conference bulletins, local gazetteers, articles, and works by local writers. From these resources, I aimed to find historical stories and facts about Jixian. 2) Ethnographic studies. In conducting ethnographic study in Jixian, I mainly used the methods of extensive open-ended interviews and participant-observation (Hunt 2003; Spradley 1980). In the field ethnographic investigation, based on the information from my preliminary study of the region of Jixian County, I chose to more closely scrutinize a few typical spots from the whole region, a way of “registering the refraction of the general within the particular” (Duara 1988: 261). These spots were the Dule Temple; the downtown area in Jixian; the villages of Yushi Zhuang, Dapingan Cun, Guojiagou Cun, and Xijingyu Cun; as well as the site of clay sculpture Master Yu Qingcheng.

According to the nature of each site, I focused on different aspects of the patterns and processes of local traditions: Dule Temple proved a useful subject to examine the process of preservation of “tradition”; the reconstructed ancient town and the annual Dule Temple Fair is used to examine the process of adaptation of “traditional culture”; the recovered folk craft workshops in Xijingyu village provide material with which to examine the situation of “traditional” in contemporary social setting; and I use emergent local stone arts and the village tourism in Yushi Zhuang, Dapingan Cun, and Guojiagou Cun to examine the process of invention of local tradition since these cultural landscapes are contemporarily initiated. The well-known clay sculpture Master Yu Qingcheng and his relationship with Yushi Zhuang are analyzed in terms of tradition and creativity.

In scrutiny of the various cases I encountered in Jixian, I generalize a model of tradition based on processes with patterns of preservation, reconstruction and remake, and invention. In the pattern of “preserving traditional culture,” traditional cultures refer to the past and represent
the past on a largest scale. These cultures may not fit in contemporary social life and are not able to survive in the contemporary social setting, but they are displayed and used to index the past. Thus, preservation of the old version of tradition is the focus in this pattern of process. In the pattern of “reconstructing and remaking tradition,” traditions are naturally selected from traditional cultures and are inherited, utilized, updated, and transformed so as to functioning within and accommodate contemporary social needs. In this type of process, traditional cultures are upgraded to cultural traditions and survive in contemporary social life through selection, adaptation, and reception. The pattern of “inventing tradition” is a process with means-end oriented purposes to create local cultural tradition through a constructive process to cope with contemporary social and economic desires.

Figure 1.3 The Conceptual Model of the Processes of Tradition

It is noteworthy that, in general, in various efforts to processes tradition, the result is the “transformation of tradition” and a modern version of tradition is born. In the following chapters, this argument will be further elaborated through various case studies.

Open-ended interview is one major method conducted in this research. From interviews, I seek to listen to local voices and to find out locals’ thoughts and feelings. I hope to learn how
tradition has been treated and negotiated by internal and external forces at different levels in the modernization process; how a tourism economy interacts with local cultural development and how a local community wisely uses local resources to build local cultural boundaries and identities (Cohen 1985); what “tradition” has been adapted, recollected, reproduced, and invented; what relationships have obtained among the state, local authorities, communities, and individuals; what contemporary political and economic forces have been involved in the process; what results have been achieved by different social institutions and individuals, and what kinds of controversy exist. I have listened to differences of opinion and experience among local constituencies and across various modes of social diversity.

I conducted open-ended, oral history interviews with local residents and obtained historical perspectives about Jixian’s history, traditions, cultural policies, and social economic changes. I also interviewed the administrative staffs who work on local cultural projects, and the heads in villages, to get to know local leadership management and stakeholders. I prepared specific questions for interviews with various focus groups. In inquiring about the ancient Dule Temple and the traditional stone house in Xijingyu village, I interviewed people by asking how the nature of traditional objects has been strategically preserved and how their inner values, meanings, and functions have been maintained and transformed from the past to the present. In the interviews conducted during the Temple Fair, I asked how these traditional forms were embedded in new social elements and played new functions in serving contemporary social life. In my interviews with Yushi villagers and cadres, I inquired as to how people interpreted their motivation to invent tradition and, further, what benefits they have received from the inventions, what they hoped, dreamed, and worried about. In addition, I conducted a series of interviews with the well-known clay sculpture Master Yu Qingcheng, who was named by UNESCO as a
distinguished folk artist in 1996, and I listened to his life stories and his artistic interpretation of
tradition and creativity.

From interviewing local people, I found that while scholars have tried a more general,
sophisticated theoretical perspective to the nature of “tradition,” local people view “tradition” in
a more concrete and straightforward way. First, local people’s thinking about “tradition” and
“modern” adheres to concrete things in their everyday life world. Tradition refers to the familiar
daily life practices of living, eating, drinking, working, celebrating, and praying. In my
interviews, local people were not interested in exploring what tradition is, but were interested in
expressing what things they liked or disliked, what they wanted to abandon and what they
wanted to adopt. For traditional things in their memories but no longer existing in their lives,
they described them as the older generation’s things (lao bei zi de shi). Second, local people’s
idea about tradition is essentially the way to maintain their good life. For instance, while
traditional dance performance hua hui still continues its entertainment function, contemporary
people also obtain health benefits from this kind of traditional dancing activity. Thus, local
residents gather together in the evening on the street to practice hua hui. They dance for
entertainment, but also for exercising their bodies. The temple fairs can be continued because the
occasion of temple fairs has been not only used for religious worship, but also as a convenient
place for trade, entertainment, and communication. Third, local people viewed tradition as
vernacular culture; they used tu (土 old fashioned, rustic, and native) to describe traditional
culture, and used yang (洋 modern, fashionable, foreign) to express modern culture and foreign
culture. In local cultural practices, to meet contemporary social needs, local people engage in a
combination of tu culture and yang culture. According to my informant Tang Zhong, tu cannot
be too tu, and yang cannot be too yang. In this way, local people handle the things either
referring to tradition or modernity in their life world. For instance, Jixian villagers updated their own dwellings as well as farmer’s guesthouse to maintain traditional style, but also added modern elements. They have kept the flat house model meanwhile they installed modern hygiene equipment. Thus, in their real life, tradition does not exist in a single, static form, but in various states and a changeable situation to serve various local life needs and interests. Finally, local people expressed that they could inherit old things from older generations, but they could also create new local cultures and new things through learning, borrowing, and doing. It seemed no problem for them to update old traditions while they continued to practice traditions such as wedding and funeral ceremonies. They also sought to create new local cultures, especially in modern social environments with more social and individual freedom than in the past. I perceived these attitudes from my on-site observations and from my interviews with local people, such as folk artist Yu Qingcheng and local villagers Wang Zuozhong, Tan Zhong, and others. These craftsmen commonly have no family tradition of a particular kind of craft, but since living in a particular natural environment and social atmosphere, they have learned and mastered special skills and take pride in their craft products. Their creative engagements have made their crafts into a regional or a village’s cultural trademark. Clay sculpture Master Yu Qingcheng’s successful clay sculpture work and his influence in Yushi villagers’ local cultural construction demonstrate this viewpoint.

A notable phenomenon is that nowadays, while local cultural practitioners hold more open and flexible attitudes toward the transformation and innovation of local cultural tradition, on the contrary, some Chinese cultural scholars show more conservative attitudes toward the change of tradition. They criticize the revised local cultural traditions and the influences of modern elements on tradition. My concern with this phenomenon is that in the contemporary
social context of China, when the government on different levels makes policies and guidelines for locals, they likely consult with cultural scholars and adopt their opinions. As a result, a cultural scholar’s views are often treated as an authoritative resource, which has influenced the policymaking. However, local grassroots’ opinions are often neglected and the villagers’ voices cannot be heard. In addition, local grassroots’ activities were often supervised and corrected by cultural elites and administrative persons. In the view of cultural elites and policy makers, locals are not trained and lack scientific, theoretical knowledge about cultural preservation. They criticize grassroots’ shortsighted vision to treat their own cultural stuff in their life environment.

In Xijingyu village, the village leader Zhou Zhanfa told me that the upper level leaders asked him to persuade local villagers to build stone houses with the old style small grey tile roof rather than brick houses with the larger red tile roof for the purpose of preserving the old culture of this historic village. Zhou Zhanfa pointed out that this guideline did not work with the actual situation and did not benefit to the villagers in terms of cost, comfort, and quality. The grey tile is heavy and costly. The stone-built house needs more labor to smooth the seams of stonewalls. Thus, in my research, I perceive the gaps in dealing with traditions between cultural scholars, cultural workers, and cultural practitioners.

Participant-observation is another important part of my fieldwork. In participant-observation, I acted like a resident in town, a friend in villagers’ homes, a tourist in the temple fair, an audience member for various performance occasions, and a folklorist researcher in formal interviews. From these embedded experiences, I came to understand local people’s complex attitudes and feelings toward the changes of their life environment, as well as what their social life and economic situation means to their culture. I observed conflicts and cooperation among various internal and external social forces, and negotiable social power relations and
contributions from the state, local agencies to community folks in this process of tradition and modernization. In the contemporary social environment in China, cultural issues become tangled with political and economic issues, and cultural program engagement and cultural tourism development cannot escape from current social problems such as officials’ corruption and environmental pollution; however, in this research, I choose to focus on and endeavor to understand the study of ordinary people’s acting on and use of tradition and heritage resources to create their modern life and to achieve their own life goals. I attempt, by examining grassroots’ acts in time and space, to find the positive social forces in social construction and to present local people’s wisdom, efforts, and creativities in continuing tradition, making culture, making life, and making their own achievements through their daily cultural practices. To a large extent, these people are also contributors to world civilization in human history.

Outline of the Dissertation

The whole dissertation includes seven chapters. In Chapter 1, I have introduced research questions, research objectives, research methods and findings, and laid the theoretical foundation for this study. In this chapter, I introduced Jixian’s phenomena of utilizing tradition in local modern construction set against the background of contemporary China’s political change and economic development process to pose my research questions on the nature of tradition and the relationship of tradition and modernization. By tracing the literature on defining tradition, I drew on Henry Glassie’s statement that tradition “be understood as a process of cultural construction” (Glassie 1995: 398) and Richard Bauman’s view of tradition as “the social process by which such continuity is achieved” (Bauman 2001: 15819) to set up the theoretical cornerstone for this study, to interpret the phenomena of preserving, continuing, and developing tradition and
accelerating modernization. I also reviewed the debate among Chinese scholars on the related issues. The goal from this research is, through an ethnographic study of Jixian, to examine the patterns of processing tradition in the course of China’s modernization, from which to get a reconsideration of the attributes, value, and function of modernized tradition in contemporary social and economic development; to address the gaps between views of tradition and different attitudes toward the processes of tradition possessed by cultural scholars, cultural workers, and cultural practitioners; to perceive the role played by and the social power relationships between the state, local agencies, community, and ordinary people, and contradictions in processing tradition.

Chapter 2 recounts the essence of Chinese tradition in history and the political economy influencing China’s transformation and cultural changes in the twentieth century, especially in recent decades during the era of China’s reform and transition from a traditional agricultural society to a modern industrial society. My research subject, Jixian, comes out from this large background. Jixian, as a microcosm of China, reflects some typical current issues of cultural preservation and development, tradition and modernization. I use Jixian’s old local gazetteers to pursue the facts concerning Jixian’s cultural traditions in history, and to make sense of today’s cultural changes and developments. From the description of Jixian’s natural environment, unique geological features, long history, agriculture-based economic patterns and social customs, I draw out Jixian’s cultural heritage significance and address the causes for Jixian being transformed from a traditional agricultural society to a modern tourist destination in the wave of modernization of China, in which I particularly look at the interactive process of local cultural heritage and modern economic and social development.
Chapter 3 focuses on a discussion of development of cultural tourism in Jixian and analyzes how tourism on the one hand promotes the preservation and invention of local cultural tradition and heritage, and on the other hand, reconstructs tradition and makes tradition serve the new functions and values of contemporary social life and economic development while also stimulating new social conflicts and concerns. I trace back the rise of the tourism industry in Jixian under the central government’s guidelines and use data to manifest how Jixian’s fast growing tourism industry has changed local rural life patterns, social institutions, and culture landscapes while stimulating local economic gains. I argue that the cultural change is based on the change of economic pattern.

In Chapter 4, I scrutinize several real cases of the restoration and invention of traditions in Jixian, such as restoration of the ancient Dule Temple, reconstruction of the ancient town, continuation of the Dule Temple Fair, and opening craft shops in local villages to make local cultural landmarks, from which I generalize a process model of tradition in the patterns of preserving traditional culture, reconstructing and remaking tradition, and inventing tradition. I also examine the role that the state, local agencies, the community, and individuals played in this process. Based on the case studies, I inquire into the attributes of Jixian’s restorations and inventions of tradition considering these as examples of framing tradition in modern construction within the realms of self, politics, and economy, and I argue that economy is not the enemy of culture but a dynamic of cultural preservation and invention.

In Chapters 5 and 6, through looking at cultural production from the processes of tradition and modernization, I discuss the mingled cultural phenomena displayed in various contemporary Jixian social settings, from town to villages, I articulate my theoretical argument that tradition and modernity are a single process. I use evidence to show how old culture and new
culture, rural culture and urban culture, local culture and global culture, meet in Jixian and are accommodated and practiced by locals to serve various contemporary social needs. The case studies from the research sites—such as the Chinese New Year celebration, the Dule Temple Fair, daily cultural activities in town, village tourism and cultural preservation and invention programs—are narrated and discussed to support my argument.

In the conclusion, Chapter 7, I summarize my empirical findings and reiterate my theoretical arguments that the radical changes of Chinese culture in the modernization process do not mean a loss or a dead end of tradition. Tradition is alive and integrated into modern construction, and it gains new values and functions in serving contemporary social life. Authentic tradition should be viewed within a processing model. Framing tradition in modern construction is a natural process and social reality. Collaboration of stakeholders, with a balance of power relations among government, local agencies, communities, and grassroots organizations, may lead to a more effective and promised result. Establishing a new vision and concept of tradition may provide us with a new insight into the relationship of tradition and modernity.
Chapter 2

Locating Jixian in Chinese History and Transformation

In this chapter, I place the study of Jixian’s tradition and transformation in the larger cultural context of China. I look at the essential features of Chinese tradition in history, the social base of Chinese tradition and changes of tradition in the new era of China’s modernization. Within this larger social context, I highlight the significance of Jixian as a suitable place for studying the process of tradition in the historic transition of China. I sketch the old traditions of Jixian and its new transformations as collected from reading local gazetteers and from my recent field experiences.

Chinese Culture in History

In 1980, an oil painting titled Father made a stir throughout China. The artist was a young art student Luo Zhongli. In 1978, after the end of the destructive years of the Cultural Revolution, Luo Zhongli entered the Sichuan Fine Arts Institute as a first session student selected through a national entrance examine. This painting was produced at a diversionary moment in Chinese history. Luo Zhongli said, “I dedicated that space to a farmer, symbolizing the commencement of the time of people” (China Today: 2012). Using a photorealistic approach, the portrait depicts an old Chinese peasant: His typically blackened peasant face with wrinkles, parched lips, and heartfelt eyes shows the result of a life full of hardships and difficulties. His injured, rough hands hold a crude bowl with a snack inside. The painting’s strong visual affectation has moved Chinese people over years. Many viewers have commented that this
painting depicts not a single father, a single peasant, but is the epitome of rural Chinese cultural life.

In his work *Culture, Power and the State: Rural North China, 1900-1942*, Prasenjit Duara examines the relations of power within all the major domains of rural social life. He argues that the term “culture” in “cultural nexus” refers to the symbols and norms embedded in organizations that are meaningful to their members. These norms encode religious beliefs, sentiments of reciprocity, kinship bonds, and the like (Duara 1988: 5). This interpretation of the term of “culture” allows us to address the penetration and presentation of a culture from its social organizations, symbols, and institutions. In my opinion, determining a particular economic pattern is a pre-requisite for understanding the social institutions and social norms of a culture because the latter are built on such a fundamental infrastructure. *Father* was honored as the symbol of rural Chinese culture because its rich cultural contents can be decoded by viewing the painting not only as a portrayal of an impressive farmer’s face, but also as the social and economic identities of this old man who realistically embodies the traditional agrarian Chinese society and the characteristics of the Chinese culture.
Chinese philosopher and cultural scholar Feng Tianyu has a concise comment on ancient Chinese culture: The semi-closed temperate environment and the agricultural economy of the “zongfa” society provide fertile soil for the growth of the ancient Chinese culture.\(^1\) Such specific geographical, historical and social factors formed a series of the ancient Chinese cultures and made them different characteristics from other nations ("在一个半封闭的暖温带大陆上滋生起来，以农业经济为生存基本手段的宗法社会，是中国古代文化得以发生发展的土壤。正是这种特定的地理、历史和社会因素，使中国古代文化形成一系列有别于其他国度和民族的特征。") (Feng 1989: 13). Feng’s comment emphasizes the particular geographical environment, the agricultural economic pattern and the zongfa social structure that shape the particular traditional Chinese cultural characteristics. Fei Xiaotong remarks that, “China as a culture is singular in the history of human kind in its stability and perpetuation” (Fei 1983: 146). Cultural Scholar Ge Zhaoguang suggests that the various areas of Chinese culture have commonalities, but is plural in nature. He delineates the unique elements of Chinese culture by using common aspects of language, social order, beliefs (such as Confucian philosophy, Buddhism, and Taoism to treat society, mind, and body, respectively), worldviews concerning the harmony of the heavens and the earth, negative and positive principles, and world cosmology (Ge 2014:111-144). These analyses point out the important features of traditional Chinese culture. However, I insist that traditional Chinese culture should be understood as sprouting from its deep roots as traditional agricultural economy. Traditional Chinese ideology, norms, beliefs, customs, and life patterns derive from this common ground. The transformation of Chinese culture from traditional to modern on a large scale means traditional agriculture has become modern agriculture, and with it has emerged industrialization and urbanization.
Jixian as a Part of a Whole

Coincidently, in Jixian, an artist from a peasant family called Yu Qingcheng, whom UNESCO named as a folk art master in 1996, also uses local farmers as his main expressive subject to interpret characteristics of Chinese culture. Through his artistic creations, the clay farmer mothers, fathers, and children vividly represent the reality and characteristics of traditional rural Chinese life: poor but steadfast, persevering and optimistic.

Figure 2.2 Grandmother by Yu Qingcheng. Photo by author, 2011

Jixian was an agricultural society throughout its long history and has the typical traditional Northern rural Chinese economic characteristics. Geographically, Jixian is in the South of the Yan Mountain range. Its North features mountains while the South consists of 57,100 hectares (gong qin) of plains suitable for farming. The Central area has lakes. A 1944 Jixian Gazetteer, Minguo Jixian zhi, records:

Jixian’s people were hardworking and thrifty. They put all their effort and energy on planting and cultivating. Even in the leisure seasons of winter and spring, they still worked on agriculture preparations. There were some slight differences: the Southern lower land villages often suffered from floods, so there was less harvest but more insufficient years. In the Central plain region, people used to store crops as the way to secure their lives. In the North mountain area, people were simple and did not do as much as the Central plain people using fruits for supplementing the yield of crops. In recent difficult times, all people in the county were out of stores and short of food. People had to eat edible wild herbs and aquatic
plants to live. Every village was in such a situation” (“全县大致勤俭耐苦，耕耘种植，既竭其力，即冬春闲暇之际亦在为农业之预备，故丰衣足食之户皆自搏衣缩食而来，所微有区别者，南部洼地村庄以多遭水患，丰少歉多，较之中部平原从事蓄贮，为馀三馀九之筹策。北方山原人尤质实而以果品补助农田之风似又逊于中部，惟近以时势艰虞，全县存储一空，食粮缺乏，食野菜水藻以度日者，无村无之，尤以七八两区为最甚。”) (Qiu 1944: 104).

This record portrays Jixian’s general economic situation in the past. It shows that agriculture had been the sole economy in the long history of Jixian. Local people from plain to mountain diligently worked on agricultural cultivation. However, they were still short of food and lived in hardship. Another local written material, Jizhou feng wu zhi, tells that in the middle of the twentieth century, after the PRC was established, Jixian used local geological resources to establish a few cement plants, but agriculture was still the main economic resource in the county. According to recent statistics reported by the Jixian government on the website Jixian zheng wu wang, by the end 2014, in Jixian County, among a total population of 855,000, the agricultural demography remains approximately 695,000. Thus, attending to the agricultural economy is the essence for us to understand Jixian’s traditional culture and its modernization. To analyze from a part and toward the whole, I will first provide a profile of the traditional Chinese agricultural culture from the perspective of its economic pattern, social institutions, family, beliefs, and customs.

China’s geographical semi-closing feature allowed it to develop independently in a self-fertilizing and self-sufficient agricultural model. Before the 20th century, except for some small household handcraft workshops and textile mills, there were almost no major industries in China. Until the middle of the 20th century, peasants constituted approximately eighty percent of the nation’s total population (Fei [1946] 1983; Stover 1976). Chinese economic life, social structure, and customs developed in this particular agricultural environment.
From ancient times to the late 20th century, the technology and ecological fundamentals of Chinese farming remained unchanged: a low energy system using simple tools and large expenditures of human labor (Fei [1946] 1983: 125; Spencer and Thomas 1971: 533). As Stover indicates, this type of agriculture featured intensive cultivation by hand gardening and horticulture, a primitive method devised in the Neolithic world. According to Stover, “A revolutionary change from gardening with hoe and spade to extensive agriculture with the traction plow never took place in China” (1976: 13). The advent of iron just replaced the flaked-stone sickles, polished-stone hoe, and shovel blades of the Neolithic tools. These farmers employed animal power merely as a useful auxiliary when necessary (Stover 1976: 58). Fei Xiaotong remarks, “It is a small surprise to see that the tools used by the Chinese peasants of today are very much similar to those excavated from ancient archeological sites” (Fei [1946] 1983: 129).

Thus constrained by farming tools, land utilization is restricted. In 1928, Baker estimated that the amount of land within the Republic of China suitable in terms of climate and topography for crop production was 700 million acres, but only 180 million acres were actually under cultivation. By restricting land utilization, the Chinese farmer had to increase his yield by intensive means of hand cultivation (Stover 1976: 97). Stover generalized the pattern of Chinese horticulture as follows: 1) Intensive application of labor to soils of high arability, individually setting out rows of crops by hand. 2) Use of a method of crowding of space and the shortening of the time required for the subsoil to restore its nutrients after each harvest, or combining inter-tillage with multiple cropping. 3) The use of animal power to complement human labor while supplementing plant foods with meat products compete. 4) Concentration on carbohydrate foods: millet, sorghum, rice, and wheat that yield more calories per acre than do vegetables and
fruits, which require more land to yield the same number of calories. 5) Prioritizing the human crop over the farm crop. The Chinese objective is a high output per unit of land, accomplished with spade and hoe, to support the densest population with the least expenditure of energy. Chinese horticultural technology was “capital-saving and labor-absorptive” (Stover 1976: 98-101). In general, primitive horticultural production had limitations in small-size land utilization and self-sufficient conditions. China during this long period did not develop much of a trade and market economy. Peasants exerted large amounts of energy in field cultivation, but received very low return and commonly lived in poverty. In such conditions, most of peasants could not afford to attend school.

This land-bound economic settlement pattern influenced China’s social organization. As Fei Xiaotong comments, “Peasantry, the key to understanding China, is a way of living, a complex of formal organization, individual behavior, and social attitudes, closely knit together for the purpose of husbanding land with simple tools and human labor” (Fei [1946] 1983: 125). Cohen emphasizes hierarchy as the basic pattern of Chinese social organization: “Territorially defined social units were located in hierarchical arrangements that integrated them into the nation as a whole” (Cohen 2005: 19). He explains that the hierarchy of local units involved a village and a multi-village community that people identified as their homeland (xiang). Larger towns and cities were the sites of markets that engaged commercial, manufacturing, and other economic activities. A market town usually served as the focal point of a region consisting of many villages. According to Cohen, “There might be nothing more than a town-based temple serving to define the entire region ritually or there might be comprehensive region-wide organizations with important economic and political functions” (Cohen 2005: 21). An administrative system was fitted into the spatial hierarchy from state to town normally on the
county level. Su generalizes that two extremes existed in parallel in China: a vertical hierarchy in which political power has been highly centralized (zhongyang), and a social structure in which power has been decentralized and spread throughout all the village communities. Traditionally, central power did not extend to the level of the county. The countryside was dependent upon the rural gentry, clan elders, warlords, and tribal chiefs for leadership. The peasants furnished resources to the state in the form of taxes, grain, and labor, but received very little in return (Su 2009: 83).

In this hierarchical social system, the basic social unit is the Chinese household, which is called hu or jia. To cope with intensive farm work and hard economic conditions, the traditional Chinese household employed a cooperate model (Cohen 2005; Fei [1946] 1983; Smith [1899] 1970). Fei Xiaotong writes, “The family in a peasant community is a sufficient unit to provide the necessary and minimum social cooperation in everyday economic pursuits” (Fei 1983[1946]: 126). There was an extended family pattern in the past. Cohen concludes that a Chinese family “was an integrated unit with respect to residence, consumption, pooling of income, and the coordination of family labor” (Cohen 2005: 118). House and land were the primary shared properties in an extended family and a common purse controlled by the jia zhang (family head). The families that owned enough land normally asked married sons to stay home to work on it, whereas, families with insufficient land usually required one son to stay home and sent other sons out as hired laborers whose wives stayed at home to take care of the family. The death of the family head, the father, meant division of the property and the household among the sons (Stover 1976:159). Such expansion among poor peasants was limited but more common with gentry. The usual practice was for aged parents to stay with one of the married sons (Fei [1946] 1983: 126). In any case, filial piety was an important social norm and moral value in maintaining
elders’ authority and appropriate social relationships. “Chinese familism thus was rooted in economic and political necessity and was not merely the product of a sentimental regard for kinship” (Stover 1976: 152). The lineage brought together a number of single or multifamily units that normally shared a common surname and ancestor into a single zongzu (clan), or a small hamlet. Households, clans, and villages are considered the basic level of social networks in a rural society.

The traditional Chinese cultural norms, beliefs, and customs are derived from the agrarian economic and social environment. The Chinese lunar calendar and festivals were generated from seasonal events for the purpose of cultivation and celebration. The lunar Chinese Twenty Four Seasonal Division Points were used as a farming schedule throughout the year according to seasonal changes. The lunar Chinese New Year Spring Festival is held at the end of winter leisure and before the start of busy spring cultivation. People celebrated and worshiped ancestors and gods to bless a good new year for farming. The autumn festival, another important traditional Chinese event, is associated with the fall harvest and the unity of the family.

Members of traditional Chinese society worshiped many gods whose function was to serve year-round agriculture activities and protection concerns of daily life. Folk beliefs and superstitions were prevalent in the past. Whether or not farmers could obtain a good harvest by way of horticulture depended largely on natural factors such as climate. Thus, the old Chinese proverb “kao tian chi fan” (the harvest of crops relies on weather) reflects to this situation. The disaster of drought, flood, or insect could cause famine. To protect the harvest, everyone from ordinary peasants to the emperor worshipped the god of Heaven (天神). They would hold a grand worship ceremony to pray to the god of Heaven to end the natural disaster. The god Earth fertilized the soil and protected crops and people. Chinese folks believed that the intercourse of
the Heaven and the Earth bred everything of the cosmos. Thus, in the spring, when farmers started to plough the field for next year’s crops, they held a ceremony to worship the Heaven and the Earth. In a traditional Chinese wedding ceremony, a common scenario is that bride and groom must do three courtesy calls of worship. The first worship was given to the gods Heaven and Earth. The second worship was given to ancestors. The third was a courtesy call between the bride and groom. Chinese folk religion serves the circumstance of the agrarian society; Stover indicates that peasants, in making sacrifices to the kitchen god or even to their ancestors, did so to seek individual gain from blessings returned by appeased spirits (Stover 1976: 198). Even the imported religion, Buddhism, was also localized to serve people’s wishes for both a bountiful harvest and numerous, thriving offspring.

There has been a split between elite culture (sometimes called great culture) and folk culture (little culture) in Chinese history. However, both cultures have roots in the common ground of agrarian soil. For example, the common subjects for traditional Chinese classic paintings are rural landscapes—mountains, rivers, plants, flowers, birds, and domestic animals. In traditional Chinese folk paintings, like New Year Paintings, the common subjects are flowers, fishes, livestock, kitchen gods, door gods, and treasure gods, among others. Elite and folk cultures also share a mindset, which we can perceive in some Chinese sayings: “Obey the will of the Heaven” (Shun cong tian yi) reflects conservatism, and “People regard food as their Heaven” (Min yi shi wei tian) reflects pragmatism.

In sum, the primitive agricultural economic pattern determined the traditional Chinese lifestyle, social organization, worldview, beliefs, and customs. This is the key that allows us to understand traditional China and its transformation into a modern nation. Today the essential change of Chinese culture can be read as a transition from a traditional agricultural culture to a
modern industry culture. The traditional agricultural heritage encounters changes and reforms during the transition.

**Reading Jixian from History and Local Gazetteers**

The discovery of rich archeological evidence from Jixian shows that human have been active the area as early as eight thousand years ago—during the Paleolithic era. In 2008, when I visited the Tianjin Museum, I found that most of the archeological objects on display in the pre-history section were from Jixian. According to Sheng Lishuang, in 2005, 27 Paleolithic localities were discovered, and approximately 1,000 stone artifacts of various types were collected at archaeological excavations in the northern Jixian County. In 2007, an archaeological team organized by the Tianjin Municipal Center for the Protection of Cultural Heritage and the Institute of Vertebrate Paleontology and Paleoanthropology of Academia Sinica excavated in Jixian at the Paleolithic Dongyingfang site, which resulted in the discovery of more than 2,000 stone artifacts (Sheng 2008: 2-5).

The territory of Jixian has had different names. In the Spring and Autumn period (770 – 221 B.C.), Jixian was called *Wuzhongzigu*. In the Warring States period (475–221 B.C.), it was called *Wuzhongji*. In the Qin dynasty (221–206 B.C.), it was *Wuzhongxian*. In the Sui dynasty (581–618), it was named *Yuyang*. In his most famous poem “*Chang hen ge,*” the poet of the Tang dynasty Bai Juyi wrote “*Yuyang pi gu dong di lai*” (the sound of drum delivers the war message from Yuyang). The *Yuyang* is today’s Jixian. In the Tang dynasty (618–907), Yuyang was changed to Jizhou. During the Yuan dynasty (1215), Jixian was called Yuyang County again. From the Ming (1368–1644) to the Qing (1644 –1911), the name Jizhou was restored, and it was used until 1913, at which point it was changed to Jixian. In 1928, Jixian became an
administrative division of Hebei province. In 1973, Jixian became a division of Tianjin city (Jin 2006: 7). Among these historic names of Jixian, the two names Yuyang and Jizhou are popularly used by locals nowadays in order to emphasize the legacy of the local history.

A local gazetteer is an important comprehensive information source for one specific area defined geographically and politically. Compiling local gazetteers is a cultural tradition in China. A gazetteer is commonly compiled by local contemporaries based on local primary sources. It follows a general gazetteer format and continues predecessors’ works to record and get updated the contemporary circumstances. Gazetteer entries commonly include local geography, history, administrative, customs and habits, religion, buildings, local products, tax, eminent persons, arts and literature, and so on. According to the information provided in the prefaces of *Jizhou zhi* (1831) and the *Minguo Jixian zhi* (1944), Jixian ancient local gazetteers can be traced from *Wenyuan ge shu mu, Tianyige shu mu, and Liao shi shi yi*. The older editions of Jizhou gazetteers include the Ming’s Chenghua 14th year edition (1478) compiled by Wang Pu, the Ming’s Jiajing 2nd year edition (1523) compiled by Xiong Xiang, the Ming’s Chongzhen 1st year edition (1628) compiled by Zhao Xipu, and the Qing’s Kangxi 17th year edition (1678) compiled by Dong Tingen. However, these old editions were all missing. Those left were the Qing’s Kangxi 43th year (1704) edition compiled by Zhang Chaozong, and the Daoguang 11th year edition (1831) by Shen Rui.

In this research, I use two valuable old local gazetteers to present the past of Jixian. They both are a revision edition based on previous editions of Jizhou gazetteers. One is *Jizhou zhi* (*Jizhou Local Gazetteer*) in 10 volumes, compiled by Shen Rui in the 11th year of the Daoguang period in the Qing dynasty (1831). The other is *Minguo Jixian zhi* (*Minguo Jixian Local Gazetteer*), which consists of 10 volumes, compiled by Qiu Xiting and revised by Xu Baoying in
1944. These two works record the social scene of Jixian in the remote past, before Jixian had stepped through the gate of modernity. They provide information about the old Jixian concerning various aspects of geography, history, buildings, temples, beliefs, local products, customs, figures, economy, literature and so on. I have excerpted some texts from the two works to portray Jixan’s old traditions. The original texts were written in Classic Chinese.

**Jizhou Zhi «蓟州志» (Jizhou Local Gazetteer) (1831) Compiled by Shen Rui**

![](image)

**Figure 2.3 Printed image of Jizhou zhi**

**Farm Scenery: Jizhou zhi** Vol. 1 “依依村舍隐新苗，漠漠水田稠青葱。” (pg. 110) (Farm houses are faintly visible among crop seedlings, water fields, and green plants.) “良农带月耕新陇，野老凌霜剪旧蔬” (pg. 112) (Even when the moon rises, diligent farmers remain ploughing the land. Rural old men harvest ripe vegetables.)

**Farm Land and Tax** (田赋): Jizhou zhi Vol. 5 (pg. 651) “原额民地五千五百顷二十八亩二分。内除学田、水田、庙宇、香火、义冢、祠堂、接官厅、营房、水冲沙压挑河修边屯租无主老荒等项，地一千一百五十一顷五十九亩四分七厘。实存民地四千三百四十八顷六十八亩七分三厘。” (The amount of civil land is originally 5500 qin and 28 mu. Excluding the land 1151 qin and 59 mu used for schools, water, temples, rituals, honored tombs, ancestor halls, administrative halls, military houses, as well as those flooded, deserts, and un-owned land, the actual farm land is 4348 qin and 68 mu. Note: 1 qin = 100 mu = 6.66 hectare; 15 mu = 100 areas = 2.47 acres)

Farm Fairs: *Jizhou zhi* Vol. 3 (pg. 509) “本城向于初一、十一、二十一为西街集。初六、十六、二十六为南街集。初三、十三、二十三为南关集。初八、十八、二十八为西关集。而东街东关不与焉。” (Conventional local market dates: The West Street Market is held on lunar 1st, 11th and 21st; the South Street Market is held on lunar 6th, 16th, and 26th; the South Juncture Market is held on lunar 3rd, 13th, and 23rd; the West Juncture Market is held on lunar 8th, 18th, and 28th. The East Street and East Juncture do not hold market days.)

Local Governance: *Jizhou zhi* Vol. 5 (pg. 637) “(里甲li and jia)：往古以乡统里，即以里分保，设乡长，保正以董之。乡镇村庄之间小而数家，大而千百，其乡友相望相助之意不犹有古风哉。顾旧书志仅八百三十三村庄，今则增为九百七十二村庄。” (In the past, the xiang (township) governed the li; the li was divided in the bao. The xiang and bao were managed by xiang zhang and bao zheng. Between xiang and cun there were as small as a few households, and as large as hundreds and thousands of households. In the xiang neighborhoods, people were caring about their neighbors. In the older gazetteers, there were only 833 cuns. Now it increases to 972 cuns (villages).)

Temples: *Jizhou zhi* Vol. 3 (pg. 457-477) Records as many as 117 temples in the area, including Taoist temples (Chenghuang tan, Guangchengzi dian), Buddhist temples (Dule si, Guanyin tang), superstition temples (Huoshen miao, Caishen miao), a Confucian temple (Wen miao) and Western Churches (San jiaotang 三教堂, Yingguo si 英国寺). The temples reflect people’s worship for various purposes, ranging from birth, death, and disease to farming, weather, water, fire, wealth, and the like. See note 4 for details.

Religious Rituals: *Jizhou zhi* Vol. 4 (pg. 584) “(秩祭) 风云雷雨山川城隍坛每岁仲春仲秋上戊日致祭。” (Each year on the lunar Wu day in mid-spring and mid-autumn, people offer sacrifices at temples of the wind, cloud, thunder, rain, mountain, river, and local deities.) Vol. 4 (pg. 586) “府州县每岁仲春亥日行耕籍礼以比古之大夫，凡以习稼穑之艰难，崇鬼神之祭祀也。” (Each year on the spring lunar Hai day, a ceremony is held by fu, zhou, and xian (three different administrative levels) in celebration of the beginning of the farming season and worshipping the supernatural for ease of farm work.) See the note for explanation to the old beliefs and worship.

Farming Rituals: *Jizhou zhi* Vol. 4 (pg. 596) “鞭春：于立春前一日，知州率僚属迎春于东郊，至春牛芒神前行五揖四拜礼。立春日黎明芒神前行礼毕，随各执彩鞭，鞭春牛三匝，毕而散。” (The day before Spring Day, the prefecture official takes his subjects to the East suburb to worship before the spring cow and farm deity. At dawn of Spring Day, after worshipping the farm deity, decorated whips are used to whip a spring cow three times, and then the ritual is finished.)

Customs: *Jizhou zhi* Vol. 2 (pg. 291-295). Below is the selective local customs. See the notes.
Marriage: (pg. 291) “婚，男家求婚，父母既有成言，则择吉，具红柬，央媒客衣冠上门四拜献柬，礼简而实重。岁时节馈环簪耳，随家贫富，亦有论聘金多少为许可者。” (For marriage, normally it is proposed by the groom’s family. If parents of both sides agree to this marriage proposal, they then choose a good day to prepare a formal proposal on red paper, and ask a matchmaker who dresses in formal attire to go to the bride’s home to deliver the marriage proposal. The ritual is simple but very important. According to local practice at that time, the bride is asked either about the dowry needed or about the amount of money instead.)

Mourning: (pg. 291) “丧，读书家遇丧事颇依文公家礼，依贫富为丰俭，不荤食，不用僧道，丧服甚重，吊客甚哀，较为近古。” (For mourning, according to ancient customs, the process is based on the wealth of the family. Meat foods are not eaten, and no religious people like monks or Taoists present for mourning. The mourning dress is serious and the mourning guests show deep grief. The custom is relatively old.)

“墓祭，以清明七月望十月朔忌辰，各从家贫富为陈设。” (Memorial ceremonies for the death in front of tombs and the offering of sacrifices according to wealth differences among the family are held during Qing Ming, July, and October.)

Festival Rituals: (pg. 292) “正月元旦，设香烛牲果，拜天地祖宗，以及阖郡神祠。爆竹逐疫，衣冠罗列，卑祝尊，幼拜长，亲友交相拜贺，旬日乃止。” (On New Year’s Day, people worship heaven, earth, and their ancestors at local temples with candles, livestock, and fruits. Firecrackers are lit to chase away woes. Wear nice clothes. The humble and young pay respects to the noble and elders, and family and friends salute to each other until the tenth day.)

“元宵设宴，张灯花炮为乐，妇女出游，名为走百病。” (Banquets are held during the Lantern Festival. Lanterns and fireworks are displayed for entertainment, and women go on outings to the suburbs in the name of walking away diseases.)

“十二月初八日，作腊八粥，杂以米豆复加枣栗。二十三日设香烛祭灶，除日贴春联，换门府，礼拜于堂，谓辞岁。” (On Lunar December 8, every household makes Laba porridge with rice, beans, jujubes, and chestnuts. On the lunar twenty-third, incense is set up to offer to the kitchen deity. On the eve of the lunar New Year, households put up spring couplets, change gate descriptors, and hold worship in the hall. It is called seeing the old year out.)

Local Figures (人物): Jizhou zhi Volume 9 is ren wu zhi, which records selected local outstanding people who were defined as local moral models. The categories include virtuous men (乡贤), which records 110 respectable, loyal, righteous, and brave men and their accomplishments in the history of Jixian (pp. 1039-1098); filial piety (孝义), which records 28 respectable practitioners of filial piety with the complementary values of loyalty (pp. 1099-1113); chaste women (节烈), which records 170 respectable practitioners of rigorous chastity who lived in widowhood for many years, some for more than forty years (pp. 1115-1172). The author notes that, according to Jizhou custom, all chaste women should receive a local officer’s board inscribed with words of praise (“蓟州风俗凡贞女节妇家有余力者率皆地方官给立匾额”).

60
Figure 2.4 Printed image of *Minguo Jixian zhi*.

The editor of *Minguo Jixian zhi*, Qiu Xiting, is a Jixian local. He was a *xiu cai*, one who passed imperial examination at the county level. Later he was influenced by modern Chinese and modern thoughts, but this work was still written in classic Chinese.

Figure 2.5 A picture of the editors of *Minguo Jixian zhi*.

Photo source: *Zhongguo di fang zhi ji cheng, Tianjin fu xian zhi ji* v.4, 2004

**Farm Land and Tax** (赋税): Vol. 5 (pg. 154) “蓟县粮租地数为九千一百九十九顷五十三亩九分，而每年负担国款省款县款乡款已达四百八十五万余元。” (Jixian had farmland of 9,199 qin and 53 mu. Each year the taxes submitted to the state, county, and xiang have reached the amount of 4,850,000 yuan.)
Local Products (物产): Vol. 1 (pg. 49-50) records fifteen categories of local products, including 农产品类, 果品类, 树木类, 菜蔬类, 野菜类, 花卉类, 药品类, 货品类, 矿产类, 家禽类, 野禽类, 野兽类, 水产类, 虫类. (Farm products, fruits, trees, vegetables, wild vegetables, flowers, herbs, goods, minerals, poultry, wild birds, beasts, aquatic products, and insects) See note for details.7

Local Governance (乡镇): Vol. 3 (pg.76) “明以鱼鳞册编里, 里有甲, 甲有户, 全郡共分二十六里。清因明制。共二十八保, 每保辖村不等共九百七十二村。有清一代乡制未改, 惟日久弊生。各村之外并不知乡政为何事。为官吏者明听讼严缉捕不苟征, 即称贤牧。为人民者租交粮完饱食以嬉, 以不识不知顺帝之则为原则, 此外无所事事, 谓之无乡政之时期。” (In the Ming dynasty, li (sub-county units) were registered by yulince (fish-scale registers). Under li is jia. Under jia is hu (households). The Qing continues the way of the Ming. The entire Yuyang jun was divided into twenty-six li. There were a total of twenty-eight baos, and under the baos there were a total of 972 cuns. In the Qing dynasty, the system did not change and some drawbacks grew. Villagers did not know xiang affairs. The rule for a good officer was to make fair judgments, strengthen legal power, and reduce taxes. The rule for the ordinary people was that after paying off the land rent, they had food to live on, and they did not need to know or learn the country’s affairs, as long as they followed the emperor’s rules. No other things were in charge. It is called the No Governance Period.) “宣统间自治制兴, 令各村举村正副各一人以司乡政, 此为乡自治之发端。” (In the Xuantong period of the Qing Dynasty, xiang’s autonomy emerged.) “民国元年划全县为八区, 区举正副区董各一人, 以董理一区之事务。警察学校保甲自卫相次成立。” (In the first year of the Republic, the whole county was divided into 8 districts. Police, schools, and bao, jia self-defense forces were established.) “三十一年大乡成立, 一千二百户以上为一等乡, 乡长副乡长各一人, 民选之。 (In the thirty-first year of the Republic, the larger xiang was established. The first class of the xiang had 1,200 households. Local folks elect one head and one associate head of the xiang.)” “城镇之公所谓之镇公所, 谓之镇长, 副镇长, 组织费用均同于乡。乡以下为保, 保以下为甲, 十甲为保。” (The zhen administration is called zhen gong suo that equals to xiang. Under the xiang is the bao. The jia is below the bao. Each jia is comprised of ten households. Ten jias comprise a bao.)

Customs (乡镇 风俗): With the following entries in volume 3:

Entertainment (娱乐): Vol. 3 (pg.104) “全县并无场所, 在昔承平之际, 习傩赛会存古遗风。迎神演剧张灯演彩。” (There is no particular site for entertainment. In the past, during peaceful periods, the locals had the custom of playing Nuo (a kind of primitive religious dance drama) and holding fairs. Old customs still exist. There are also shows and decorations for entertaining deities.)

Marriage (婚姻): Vol. 3 (pg. 104) “昔以财产相若门户相当为男女两性必要之条件。农家聘礼女家妆奁。贫困者嫁女无资少索财礼, 以为嫁女时之衣饰。初婚者男女年龄相差至多不过四五岁。近年男女注重求学婚姻, 渐趋重知识。” (In the past, equality in household wealth and social rank of the two families of the bride and groom was an important condition. The groom’s family offers money to the bride’s family and the bride’s family prepares a dowry. Poor families had less money for marriage, so they asked for less of a dowry. Recently, men and women are more interested in seeking marriage via studies, in regard to education.)

Mourning (丧礼): Vol. 3 (pg. 104) “普通人家于人初死举家痛哭, 再差人往各戚友处送信谓之报丧。戚友家闻信即遣人持纸帛果供前往吊唁, 谓之官敛。死者家中挂命纸, 殡榜于门
侧，男左女右，于次日日暮或日中再将死者大殓入棺...孝子痛哭，亲友北面行礼，孝子答礼，谓之送行。贫穷小户多于此日埋葬。少丰之家停七日或二七日不等，另具仆文报于各亲友，云某日成主家祭某日酬奠发引其仪式多本温公家礼，从前有延僧道唪经糊纸张以表示尽人子之心者，自民国以来风气开通，多半废除。”(Ordinary people would start wailing with their family the moment the person dies, and then send someone to give the message of the death to relatives and friends. When the relatives and friends’ family receive the message, they would send a representative with paper, silks, food, and other offerings of mourning. This is called the official mourning process. The family suffering from the death would hang “life papers” beside the gate. If the deceased is a man, then the paper would be hung on the left, and if it is a woman, then it would be hung on the right. The deceased would be placed into a coffin at dusk or noon of the next day. The son in mourning cries loudly; relatives and friends salute towards the north, and the son returns the salute, sending death off. Poor families often have the burial on this day. Relatively rich families would have the burial after seven or fourteen days have passed. Also, an eulogy is prepared and sent to relatives and friends, including a message of the schedule of holding a memorial ceremony. In the past, the mourning family invited monks to chant scriptures to express filial piety to the deceased [elder]. This practice has been mostly abolished since the Republic.)

**Festivals** (节日): Vol. 3 (pg. 105) “正月 查国体变更，年月俱改用阳历，惟民间习惯均依旧历而行。欲考其风俗亦不得不仍用旧历。初一日为元旦节，设香烛牲果酒醴庶品之仪于祖宗及各神祠前，敬谨致祭并拜年。卑拜尊，幼拜长。各亲友亦交相拜贺。近来改用阳历，各机关于一月一号照例举行团拜。城镇乡村住户一般民众仍于旧历元旦贺年，积习难反。十五日为元宵节。昔时设宴张灯放花炮为乐，妇女出游名走百病，今则放花炮之风已废止，然各家用纸捻灯花拌以麻油，沿路燃撒，仍盛行。二十五日早晨于院内以灰作圈中藏五穀，名曰打仓，祈丰收之意也。乡农家此风盛行。” (The country has changed to use of the solar calendar, but folks still use the lunar calendar. So, to observe folk customs, time must still be counted by the lunar calendar. In the first day of the lunar New Year that is called the **Yuan Dan** holiday, people offer incense, animal sacrifices, fruit, liquor, and common utilities in front of ancestor portraits or in shrines to worship and greet ancestors and gods. The humble and young people pay respects to the nobles and elders, and family and friends salute each other. Recently, it has changed so that offices hold group salutes according to the solar calendar. But households in town and in the countryside still celebrate the New Year according to the lunar calendar. The old convention is difficult to be changed. The fifteenth day of the first month of the lunar year is the **Yuanxiao** holiday. In the past, banquets were held and lanterns and fireworks were displayed for entertainment, and women went on outings to the suburbs in the name of walking away diseases. Now fireworks are prohibited. But every household mixes paper and sesame oil to make lamp fireworks and displays them along the road. It is popular. On the twenty-fifth, people get up early in the morning to use ashes to make circles and place grains inside, called *da cang*, or “hoarding,” by means of praying for good harvest. This custom is popular in local villages.)

Vol. 3 (pg. 105) “十二月八日各家作腊八粥，杂以米豆，复加枣栗。二十三日祭灶神，用糖瓜作供，配以香烛。除夕，帖春联，换门符，礼拜祭天地祖先，谓之辞岁。于家中小孩散给岁钱，多少不拘。” (On the lunar December 8, every household makes **Laba** porridge with rice, beans, jujube, and chestnuts. On the twenty-third, people offer sacrifices to the kitchen deity with candy, fruit and incense. On the eve of the lunar New Year, families put up spring couplets, change gate descriptors, and worship the heaven and earth deities and ancestors. It is called
“seeing the old year off.” Adults give kids some “ya sui” money, no matter less or more.). Other, more seasonal rituals are in the note section.8

**Temples** (建置：坛庙祠观): Vol. 6 (pg. 154-163) The *Minguo Jixian zhi* records 165 temples. However, it also reveals that, in the Republic period, some temples were no longer used for religious worship but utilized as other local public facilities such as schools, hospitals, police, and administrative buildings. Below is some evidence:

“广福寺在县署后，相传为安禄山府改造然，无可考。今改为初中学校。” (The Guangfu temple is behind the County Hall. Today it has been transformed into a middle school.)

“文庙在城西北隅，今存东院为旧儒学，于民国二十一年县立女子完全小学校移此。” (The Wen temple (Confucian Temple) at the north-west part of town, today still has the east courtyard as an old Confucian school. In the 21st year of the Republic, the public girls’ school was moved here.)

“文昌庙在文化街。嘉庆二年州牧张颜倡率绅士崔钰金文基捐募重修，今改为警察第一分所。” (The Wenchang temple was on the Cultural Street. Today it has been changed to the first branch of the police office.)

“火神庙今存已无偶像归教育馆及清乡总部占用。” (The temple of the Fire deity still exists, but there are no deity statues. It is attributed to the education sector and the qing xiang headquarters to use.)

“北城根下曰关帝庙今存已无偶像，现改为县立医院。” (Under the North town wall was the Guandi Temple. Today no deity statues exist in the temple. The temple is used as the county hospital.

“药王庙在城西北隅，今存，已无佛像，现被新民会占用。” (The temple of the Medicine god is at the northwest corner of town. It is still there, without statues, and occupied by the New Peoples’ Association.)

**Local Figures** (人物): *Minguo Jixian zhi* Volume 4 records selected local outstanding people seen as role models. Local Virtuous Men (乡贤) records 116 respectable, loyal, righteous, and brave men and their accomplishments in the history of Jixian (Vol.4, p.110-119); Filial Piety (孝义) records 30 respectable practitioners of filial piety and loyalty (Vol.4, p.119-121); Chaste Women (节烈) records 205 respectable, rigorously chaste women who lived in widowhood (Vol.4, p.122-132).

The information provided from the two local gazetteers reveals Jixian’s social, economic, and cultural situations during the period from the Qing dynasty and into the middle of the 20th
century. Below I draw a comparison of the data from the two gazetteers to describe trends and changes from the federal imperials to the Republic. The comparison shows the general fact that, from the ancient Ming-Qing period to the first half of the 20th century, Jixian maintained and even intensified its commitment to traditional agriculture. The local administrative system was changed after the establishment of the Republic (Minguo), but the basic social unit founded on natural space and kinship such as the xiang (towsnhip), cun (village) and the “hu” (household) remained. Some corrupt customs were abolished under the new local governance, such as some superstitions. Some temple buildings were reconfigured as civil facilities such as hospitals and schools.

Table 2.1 Data Comparison of Jizhou Zhi (1831) and Minguo Jixian Zhi (1944)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Jizhou zhi (1831)</th>
<th>Minguo Jixian zhi (1944)</th>
<th>Trend</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Farm Land</td>
<td>4148 qin*</td>
<td>9199 qin</td>
<td>Increased</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Products</td>
<td>11 Natural resources, Farm products</td>
<td>15 Natural resources, Farm products</td>
<td>No changes except for minerals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>li, bao, xiang, cun, hu (972 cun)</td>
<td>xian, qu, xiang, cun, hu (972 cun)</td>
<td>Changed on county level, no change on xiang and cun level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temples</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>Increased amount, but some temples were used for civil facilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moral Figures</td>
<td>Virtuous men 110, Filial piety 28, Chaste women 170</td>
<td>Virtuous men 116, Filial piety 30, Chaste women 205</td>
<td>Increased. Moral categories remain the same.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: 1 qin =100 mu= 6.66 hectare; 15 mu = 100 areas = 2.47 acres

However, in general, traditional economic life, ritual, festival practices, and moral norms derived from China’s agricultural roots were strengthened rather than weakened. The religious
cults and ritual practices reflect a tendency for Jixian locals, living in a self-supported primitive agrarian society, to seek security from nature, ancestors, and protective deities they revered. The institutional structure and moral norms, from a large area to basic household units, reflect the need to maintain a stable social system in a small-scale, peasant economy. The system of li, bao, xiang, cun, hu is a well-constructed hierarchical social network that maintains the social order at different levels of the county. Filial piety strengthens submission and cooperation within the family unit, and the widowhood honor intends to keep the household a stable economic unit in the event of the husband’s death.

The Impact of Modernization on Traditional Culture

Cotterell observed that, “The amazing absorptive power of Chinese culture has encouraged some observers to label it as unchanging. In reality there were large-scale internal transformations and constant movements of the imperial boundaries: these alternations are not always perceived clearly for the reason that they were slow in comparison with the rush of events in the twentieth century” (Cotterell 1988: xxi). The modern transformation of Jixian culture generally corresponds with the political, economic, and social changes of Chinese society during the twentieth century. Thus, it is necessary to sketch the whole picture of China’s modern transformation in order to provide a context for the cultural changes in Jixian. In general, the transformation of Chinese cultural tradition has taken place from super structure to economic base, from urban to rural, from small group elites to common people, from the state administrative engagement to the natural practice in individuals’ everyday life. The fate of tradition has been closely related to socio-political movements in the 20th century.
From a macro view of modern Chinese history, commonly, historians divide modern Chinese history into three periods. The first period begins with the 20th century and extends to the establishment of the PRC in 1949. The second period is from 1950s to the late 1970s, and the third period is from 1978 to the present. Such a periodization is based on “the revolutionary stages” of China: Semi-colonialism and semi-feudalism; semi-socialism and socialism; and reform socialism. From a different perspective, some historians delineate two periods of modern Chinese historiography. The first period runs from 1911 to 1978, during which a series of political campaigns and revolutions colored with violence shaped politics through the Nationalist Party and the Communist Party until the late 1970s. The second period is from 1978 to the present, with concentration on opening and modernization (Gao 2013:18).

In my view, the two perspectives both provide us with a lens through which to examine the processes of tradition in modern Chinese history from a different angle. With this perspective on the three periods of modern Chinese history of, the first period can be considered a reform period; the second period is a negation period; and the third period is a framing period. Alternately, if analyzing within a framework of two periods, the first period of almost eighty years in the 20th century, tradition underwent a series of political storms directed by Chinese elites. The form of tradition was negated or changed from within the domains of politics and cultural ideology. The root of tradition in rural China, supported by the agrarian economic pattern, was unchanged. My basis for this argument is that, beginning in the 1950s, sweeping land reform seized property from landlords and gave it to the state. The peasants joined collectives and modified the post-harvest distribution of agricultural commodities. The state developed an industry infrastructure in urban areas but not in rural. Thus, rural peasants were still tightly bound to land, and there were no significant changes to their routine lives and social
practices. In the second period, along with the reform of agricultural operation systems and the rapid development of rural industry, the traditional agricultural economic pattern experienced changes that have caused the transformation and reconstruction of the rural culture in depth.

Chinese intellectuals and elites, enlightened by the Western thought and culture, led a political revolution that began in the early twentieth century. This revolution overturned the two thousand years of feudal imperialism and established the Republic. This premature political power introduced the new concept of nation-state but failed to deal with China’s social and economic problems. In its early stage, the surface changes to the Chinese culture took place through political propaganda and the New Cultural Movement. They were most visible in urban, elite groups and administrations. Women were released from the torture of bound feet, and men cut their long braids. Free marriage and western style social institutions and public schools also infiltrated cities and towns in the early years of the 20th century (Dai 2013; Liang 2013; Duara 1988).

In rural China before the 1950s, little real change was evident among most of the land, population, traditional economic structure, social organization, and culture. In seeking a way to change Chinese society as a whole, from the 1920s, the CCP (Chinese Communist Party) leader Mao Zedong turned his attention to Chinese peasants and indicated that China’s key problem, which must be solved first, was the problem of peasants. Thus, Mao Zedong invented a famous theory that to establish a solid base in the countryside and to arouse the peasantry as the main force of the revolution. He asserted that using countryside to encircle cities is the path for the triumph of the Chinese revolution. This theory was based on the fact that peasants were the majority population in traditional China, which had an independent rural economy and an autonomic self-governance in rural areas. This theory helped the CCP gain power in 1949. On
the other hand, Mao Zedong also knew that to consolidate the political power, the traditional model of rural China had to be reformed. Mao Zedong indicated that peasant households had remained individual economic production units for several thousand years. Such scattered individual production was the base of a traditional feudal economy and ensures that peasants always live in poverty. According to Mao, collectivity was the only way to change this situation (Mao 1964: 303). Thus, when the CCP defeated the Nationalist Party in 1949, the first priority was land reform in the countryside.

As Myron Cohen describes, “During the 1949 land reform those labeled ‘poor peasants’ or ‘lower middle peasants’ were about equal in number to ‘middle peasants’ with 2 percent of the population classed as ‘rich peasants’ or ‘landlord’. Following the confiscation and redistribution of land mostly belonging to ‘landlords’ or ‘rich peasants’, the basic unit in agriculture remained the family farm. Only about half the village families joined the lower-level cooperatives organized in 1953, but in 1955 there began the full collectivization of agriculture and other enterprises that lasted until 1982” (Cohen 2005: 78). Through the course of rural reform, the feudal land system with a private landlord was eliminated and the land right was given to the state. Peasants became members of communal corporations. In rural villages, the CCP selected cadres to organize peasants as production teams to do farming and to manage village affairs. This was a historical change to traditional Chinese social structure because, as Fei puts it, “In the traditional system of government the tentacles of the central power stop at the xian (county)” (Fei [1946] 1983: 139). Stover remarks that the old configuration of the agrarian state has vanished since 1950 under communism in power and the government reaches into village life to exercise unprecedented controls over production, values, and beliefs (Stover 1976: 1).
From the 1950s to the 1970s, the socialist ideology swept away old beliefs and cultural practices. Folk religions, temple fairs, and rituals were considered feudalist traditions and superstitions, and they were prohibited by the government. In the past, farmers going through a drought would hold a ceremony to pray to the heaven god for rain. Under socialism, people followed Mao’s thought that “man can conquer the heaven.” Numerous irrigation canals were dug to fight drought. However, although the old traditional practices were prohibited under socialism, the strict households register system *hu kou* (户口) administered in rural and urban areas during the 1950s, 60s, and 70s had prevented peasants from leaving their homeland to participate in urban industry and development. As a result, peasants actually lived in the traditional agricultural environment with less modern urban influences.

In general, political movements during the first eighty years of modern Chinese history had forcefully turned on a new facet of Chinese culture. The changes in culture were mainly directed by social elites through political propaganda. In this course, the traditional “capital-saving and labor-absorptive” agriculture production model remained; peasants were almost bound in land and lived in poverty. A wide gap separated the rural and the urban. Based on his studies of rural China in Kaixian’gong from the 1930s to the 1980s, Fei Xiaotong points out “the experience of generations has shown clearly that in an area like Kaixian’gong, where there is an enormously high population density and insufficient arable land, grain production alone cannot bring about drastic improvement in the peasants’ livelihood. The key lies in the comprehensive and simultaneous development of agriculture, sideline production, and rural industry” (Fei 1983: 10).

In December 1978, in the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Congress held by the Chinese Communist Party launched a new policy of “reform and opening” and shifted the
direction of the nation to concentrate on economic development and the four-modernization construction. The political shift thrust the nation into a new era in which China moved from a socialist state, where the central government firmly and centrally controlled all economic activities, to a more open market economy. Furthermore, in 2003 China joined the WTO and entered the global economic market. The reform allowed private businesses and individuals more freedom to engage their own entrepreneurship, which had been almost suppressed during the Mao era.

On the other hand, from the perspective of political social structure, the hierarchical administrative system and social structure is still in operation. The government has maintained a central power in participating market activities rather than embracing a form of western-style democracy (Sofield and Li 2011: 502). As a result, the new reformation was undertaken as a complex political economy; that is, China’s political institutions, its socio-political environment, and its economic structures influence each other (Sofield and Li 2011: 504). Naughton argues that China is experiencing two incomplete transitions. The first is a gradual transformation from a centrally controlled economy to a market economy. The second is industrialization and a protracted transformation from a rural to an urban society. Since these changes are far from complete, China finds itself coping with “parts of the traditional, the socialist, the modern, and the market, all mixed up in a jumble of mind-boggling complexity” (Naughton 2007: 4). This also accounts for the fact that most local projects are normally accomplished with involvement of state, local agency, community, and individuals in contemporary China.

In rural China, the initial change of agricultural policy in the new era launched with the de-collectivization starting in early 1982. Since the collectivization operation failed to effectively enhance agricultural production and the rural economy, on January 1, 1982, the central
government formally changed the agriculture management model from “collectivization” to “responsible production of the household” (jia ting lian chan ze ren zhi), which it defined as one of the socialist collective economic forms (Chi 2013: 6). With that change, farmland that had since the 1950s been assigned to the production team was equally allocated to each farm household. Cohen did his field investigation in Hebei province of northern China. He writes that:

Distribution was per capita irrespective of age, sex, or marital status, with land assigned on the basis of existing family units. The procedure was to divide a large block of land into as many plots (each usually a narrow strip) as there were team members. Lots were then drawn by each family’s head, who on that basis would be given as many adjacent plots as there were members in his family eligible to receive land. Each family thereby obtained several larger plots assigned according to the terms of fourteen-year leases. This process was quite appropriately called “contracting production to the household” (bao chan dao hu), for it marked the restoration of family-based agriculture (Cohen 2005: 79).

This account reveals an interest phenomenon in rural China. After operating for almost thirty years with collective agriculture system, it reverted to the traditional model of family-based agriculture. This reversion could be described as a return to tradition in the purpose of developing modern agriculture. So a question is what result comes from such a traditionalized modernization process.

From a historic viewpoint, we may find differences between traditional family-based agriculture in the past and in the new era. Prior to the 1950s, land distribution within the family-based agriculture was unequal. A small number of landlords owned the majority of land. A large population of poor peasants had a little or no land, which they had to rent from a landlord. They put in hard work but saw little or no returns at the end of year after paying the rent. Thus, most of peasants got no reward for their hard work, and their individual creativities were suppressed. Under the new system that began in the 1980s, land was equally distributed to each household according to eligible family members and family size. Households were granted some autonomy to decide which crops they would like to farm and to sell to the state. The government also
eventually withdrew from price controls. Thus, the peasants actually ran their farming in a market economy, and their individual enthusiasm and innovation became mobilized.

A large number of Chinese peasants have received benefits from this state policy. When rich peasants sought more opportunities to use their spare resources and capital, they began to develop rural industries. According to statistics from the Yearbook of National Statistics Bureau of China, in the last three decades China’s economy has grown nearly 10 percent each year, and the number of peasants living in absolute poverty has dropped from 250 million to 26 million. The agriculture share of GDP dropped from 33 percent in 1982 to 12.6 percent in 2005 (Su 2009: 91). The rural township industry has become a larger portion in the national economy. The policies also mobilized a large number of extra farm laborers who migrated from rural areas to the cities. As groups of peasants immersed themselves into modern urban life, they have also become a force for the modernization of local tradition through their connection to their hometowns. Thus, during this period, interactions between rural and urban have reached a new phase. In his analysis of China’s new rural development strategies, Su emphasizes, “Growth in agriculture, nonfarm employment, and rural industry and the transformation of domestic and international markets have changed the face of rural China and are playing key roles in the nation’s modernization” (Su 2009: 119). In my view, this assessment can go beyond economy to cultural extent.

Rural economic development has directly influenced the emergence of the new rural culture in many respects, from economic activities to life styles and cultural values. Some striking phenomena can be observed. Traditionally, peasants only relied on farming to live, but now peasants use natural resources, agricultural heritage, and traditional customs to encourage village tourism. They still do farm work, but they work with modern ideas and management.
They choose to work with some high profit farm products according to market demand. They use marketing strategies to determine what they will plant in a coming year. They know urban people worry about food pollution in modern environment, so they have developed organic vegetables and fruits. They also know to do further agricultural product processing to increase the value of raw products. Thus, in this period, not only rural income and life conditions have been improved, but also the economic culture shows real changes from the past. The modern agriculture has blended with traditional agriculture, modern tourism industry, and free market economy. Conversely, these changes have also appealed to urban investors, entrepreneurs, and tourists and have caused an unlimited interaction of rural culture and urban culture.

Looking at other aspects of rural lives, traditional extend family units with several generations and several married sons living together under one roof have vanished nowadays. Instead, the nuclear family model has become common. Elders also live independently. The old festivals are still celebrated, but some of the original meanings are lost, replaced by new meanings and functions. Some old customs and religious activities have been recovered, but some do not occur in daily life, being merely occasional performances. Traditional culture has been oriented to participate in the modernization process. I describe the phenomena of traditional culture in this modern process as “framing tradition.” In this process, tradition is represented, reformulated, reconstructed, invented, as it participates in modern construction.

Transformation of Jixian Culture

I chose Jixian to examine the processes of tradition in the transformation of China because Jixian is a typical place, representing the old as well as the new China. The territory-based hierarchical social administrative system of state, city, county, township (xiang), and
village has been continued even with the changes of land policy and agricultural management. Up to 2010, China had 1491 counties and 40,906 xiang units. Jixian is on the county level that can be recognized from its name. Ji comes from its ancient name, Jizhou, which was from the Tang dynasty. Xian in Chinese means “county.” The name Jixian has been used since 1913.

County as an administrative division has existed more than two thousand years, since the Spring and Autumn period. In the hierarchic administrative system, a county locates on the third level and normally covers a central town, a few of townships (xiang), and many villages (cun). Xiang is on the lower level of county and consists of “cun” (cun = village). Cun is a solid rural, social, and economic institution formed by spatiality and blood lineage. Normally a settlement cun consists of households either below one hundred or more than several hundred. Jixian area, 1590 square kilometers, consists of a central town, 26 xiangs, and 949 cuns. As of 2014, there are 855,000 people in Jixian.10

To me, Jixian is a suitable place to observe the relation of tradition and modernity because as a county it is an interaction zone of state and local, urban and rural, traditional and modern. First of all, in the past Jixian was typical a traditional agricultural society, so it has rich agricultural heritage and resources. Many places in Jixian still preserve the countryside landscape, and many things still show strong ties with traditional agriculture, such as farmer market fairs and the dancing activity huahui. In the modernization process, local agricultural heritage gains new meanings and functions through developing local rural leisure tourism. Second, natural and cultural advantages provide great opportunities for Jixian to develop modern tourism. Beautiful natural landscapes with mountains, lakes, and picturesque terrains; many ancient artifacts underground; magnificent ancient structures and relics inspire locals to use them
to promote local modernization and to make the local transformation from a traditional agricultural society to a multifaceted modern place, a fashionable tourism destination.

Moreover, Jixian’s specific geographical location close to several urban cities like Beijing, Tianjin, and Tangshan, provides it with the possibility of connecting to urban centers. Nowadays, since the well-developed highway system, travel to Beijing and Tianjin from Jixian only takes less than 2 hours by car or bus. Trains also run between Tianjin and Jixian, and recently began to run between Beijing and Jixian for tourists’ convenience with a special low fare. This means that Jixian is at the intersection of rural and urban. The daily connection between Jixian and urban environments deeply impacts the trends of local culture. Thus, the notable issue in contemporary China about the interaction of rural culture and urban culture, tradition and modernization, vividly coheres in Jixian.

A recent local gazetteer, *Jizhou feng wu zhi*, reveals the radical changes of Jixian in the new era. In the following, I will give a brief summary of this local gazetteer, published in 2006, to see how Jixian is described and what difference it shows compared to the records in the old local gazetteers, and what local transformation from past to present can be detected.

*Jizhou Feng Wu Zhi « 蓟州风物志 » (Jizhou Sceneries Gazetteer) (2006)*

The gazetteer *Jizhou feng wu zhi* was written and compiled by several contemporary Jixian writers: Jin Zhendong, Liu Chun, and Dong Xiuna. The writers are not only natives, but also have an enthusiasm for Jixian culture. For example, the writer Jin Zhendong was a high school teacher in Jixian’s First High School. He passed away in 2004 before this book was published. He spent many years collecting Jixian’s Pan Mountain legends and published several works about Pan Mountain’s history and cultural legendry in his lifetime. Thus, this gazetteer is
also an important information source for us to learn local social and cultural facts. In the title of this book, he does not use the current name Jixian, but its ancient name Jizhou. This hints that this gazetteer aims to present the place in a historic sense; however, the content of this work reveals the radical changes of Jixian in modern era.

First, the information provided in this local gazetteer shows its writers’ new purpose and new perspective in writing about Jixian. This work does not follow the old gazetteers’ conventional format and entries; instead, it organizes in a new way with nine chapters: A general introduction of Jixian, Jixian’s scenic spots and historic sites, legends and stories, cultural celebrities, Jizhou special local products, local enterprise, education development, a travel guide, as well as a geographic atlas and tourist map. The covered topics show that the purpose of this gazetteer is to provide local information to non-local readers and tourists rather than a conventional local record.

In the General Introduction to Jixian, besides an overview of the old history of Jixian, this book supplements Jixian’s modern history since the PRC was established, such as the change of local administrative governance through the period of 1946 to 2004, the management of the commune corporation system between 1958 and 1982, population and local constructions in irrigation, industry, and transportation facilities from the late 20th century to 2004.

In the section about scenic spots, the book strikes on charming natural scenery, long history, rich heritage, and social economic improvement. Temples were described with regard to exquisite workmanship, legends, and historical architecture values, rather than original religious functions and traditional worship. Old ritual ceremonies are not described in this new local gazetteer, either.
To introduce the special local products, in a manner different from the old gazetteers, this book only includes some selected local products and explains some important nutrition facts with a modern perspective in order to appeal to urban readers. For instance, the section called “Local Special Mountain Products and Fruits” includes 盘山柿子 (Panshan Persimmons), 蓟红山楂 (Ji red hawthorn), 核桃 (Walnut), 燕山板栗 (Yanshan Chestnut), 软枣猕猴桃 (Actinidia arguta). It explains that the Panshan persimmon is rich in Vitamin C and Carotene. Ji red hawthorn contains nutrients such as protein, Vitamin C, fat, citric acid, and calcium. It also mentions that these products have been sold in domestic as well as foreign countries.

Second, compared to the old gazetteers, this work illustrates the social transformation of Jixian from an old farmland to a thriving tourism destination. It reveals a series of new development in major industries, tourism, education, and civil construction. The section on “Local Enterprise” recounts new developed Jixian’s local resource based industries. The list of the local enterprises includes breweries, cement, construction groups, garment factories, chemical companies, mineral water, and stone arts and crafts. Although some industries can be traced to primitive workshops in Jixian that grew up based on local resources such as liquor and cement, now they are developed into modern industries. Mineral water and stacked stone arts and crafts businesses are completely new sectors that emerged from the contemporary consumer market and a fast-growing local tourism industry. The “Travel Guide” section in the book directly reflects Jixian’s new direction in recent decades. It provides information about current traveling, travel agencies, shopping, and transportation. In the section about “Local Famous Figures,” this gazetteer takes new selecting criteria to reflect new moral and social ideology. The traditional categories in the old gazetteers that record local figures (seniors, officers, pass examiners, rural gentlemen, virtuous men, practitioners of filial piety and widowhood) have been
eliminated; instead, the gazetteer introduces eighteen local eminent figures, including outstanding heroes, writers, and artists from antiquity to contemporary times.

**Findings from Reading the Old and the New Local Gazetteers**

The table below is created from a comparison of the old local gazetteers *Jizhou zhi* (1831) and *Minguo Jixian zhi* (1944) with the recent local gazetteer *Jizhou feng wu zhi* (2006).

Table 2.2 Data Comparison Based on the Three Local Gazetteers (1831 -2006)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local landscape</td>
<td>Natural Geography</td>
<td>Natural Geography</td>
<td>Tour scenery spots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Products</td>
<td>Record everything</td>
<td>Record everything</td>
<td>Local special products for tourists’ interests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td><em>li, bao, xiang, cun, hu</em> (972 cun)</td>
<td><em>xian, qu, xiang, cun, hu</em> (972 cun)</td>
<td><em>xian, xiang/zheng, cun, xiang</em> is changed to <em>zheng</em> (town). 26 <em>town</em> (镇), 945 cun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temples</td>
<td>Religious sites</td>
<td>Religious sites</td>
<td>Religious/Cultural relics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worship</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Figures</td>
<td>Virtuous men, filial piety, widowhood</td>
<td>Virtuous men, filial piety, widowhood</td>
<td>Heroes and cultural celebrities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local shops and industries</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Grocery, clothing, grain, breweries, iron, and china shops</td>
<td>Breweries, cement, garments, chemicals, mineral water, stone arts and crafts, tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel guide</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This table, drawn from the three local gazetteers, shows the social changes in Jixian during different historic periods. I place them in three time frames: the ancient, the Republic period, and the contemporary. In ancient times, in a small-scale agricultural social environment, Jixian’s local religions, folk rituals, and festivals were quite active. This reflects local people’s concerns with the harvesting of crops, weather, natural disasters, life, death, disease, marriage, and family relations. In a word, people seek ample crops, safety, and family prosperity. In the past, without modern technology and scientific knowledge, people could only seek protection from deities by holding rituals and offering sacrifices. There were some transformations from the Qing dynasty to the Republic. The changes took place within local governance and administrative legislation in prohibiting corrupt customs, but the fundamental agricultural economic system did not change.

The radical and fundamental changes of Jixian revealed from the recent local gazetteer *Jizhou feng wu zhi* can be summarized thus: 1) changes in economic pattern. Jixian’s economic pattern has been transferred from a single agriculture model to a multi-faceted economic model combining agriculture with industry and modern tourism infrastructure; 2) changes in local governance. The administrative change from the xiang to the township reflects the recent statewide urban-township urbanization movement and the transformation of Jixian from a rural area to an intersection zone of rural-urban in the course of China’s modernization; 3) changes in ideologies, beliefs, and moral values. The religious ritual practices and moral figures recorded in the old local gazetteers are not included in the recent local gazetteer.

From reading old local gazetteers, I found that the local traditional customs recorded in the old gazetteers—for examples, religious worship, festivals, marriage, and funeral—rites are quite similar to those performed in many other areas of northern China. Coincidently, I also
found that the new gazetteer *Jizhou feng wu zhi* (*Jizhou Sceneries Gazetteer*) published in 2006 does not include content about local customs and festivals. This omission brings the words of Mr. Zhang, a local cultural worker’s whom I interviewed. Zhang was a young *ke zhang* (head) in the Cultural House unit of the Jixian Culture Bureau. I asked him to introduce me to Jixian’s local traditions. He answered, “Nothing is special here, actually. All can be found in other places, for example, *Pingju* [a kind of folk drama play that is popular in Hebei province] or the Buddhist ritual *Guanyin ci fu* [Guanyin brings fortunes to people].” He meant that there are no local traditions unique to Jixian. However, I speculate that in my field research in Jixian I encountered some impressive cultural practices unfamiliar to Mr. Zhang. This strange phenomenon impels me to explore why such a gap exists. How do local cultural workers define local traditions and view the new local construction and innovation of cultural traditions? What is the reality of Jixian culture in contemporary social practices and local developments? In the following chapters, I will explore these questions through my ethnographic observations and investigations in the contemporary social setting of Jixian.
Chapter 3

Cultural Tourism Played in the Preservation and Invention of Local Cultures

In this chapter, I will account the role of tourism in facilitating Jixian’s local modernization, in promoting reconstruction of local traditions, and in inventing new traditions. I will analyze how this modern development occurred and has engaged in the local context as part of a global trend and the state’s modernization plan. Then I will use my field investigation to show the role the state, local government, and ordinary people have played in this process, and how Jixian’s cultural tourism endeavors have made changes to local traditional culture and social life from the surface level to its depth, and how local traditions integrate into modern constructions.

In observing how contemporary economic and political activities affect the continuity of tradition, one view opposes the commercialization of “traditional culture” and decries economic gains from cultural tourism. Atkinson Wells points out that the selective use and interpretation of the past (i.e., heritage) and the transformation of these selected elements into products for tourist consumption are an industry that is driven by the dollar, not ethics or preservation concerns (Wells 2006: 10). From a different point of view, Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett positively views that “integration of heritage into economies of cultural tourism is economically viable, is consistent with economic development theory, and can be brought into line with national ideologies of cultural uniqueness and modernity” (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2006: 183). She asserts that while culture is an externality in economic theories of markets, economics is not an externality in theories of culture. Regardless of which of these two positions is taken, the debate demonstrates that cultural tourism is an interactive production of culture and economy. Studying
cultural tourism provides a window through which we can see how cultural tradition is treated through modern industry activities and transformed in the contemporary world.

Chinese cultural tourism has grown rapidly, accompanying the dramatic change and development of Chinese society in the last thirty years. To facilitate its modernization in adopting various political, economic, and cultural strategies to secure the growth of the Chinese economy and to improve the quality of life of Chinese citizens, cultural tradition and heritage resources have also been utilized to serve the national goal of modernization. One of the significant ways that has been undertaken is the use of traditions and notions of tradition along with other heritage resources to develop and promote tourism programs: restoring ancient cultural relics, building folk villages, establishing folklore museums, framing ancient “cultural streets,” holding markedly traditional festivals and rituals in tourist-friendly ways, staging folk arts exhibitions, and inventing vernacular arts and crafts. All these forms I have seen in Jixian during my field research. These notable social actions and endeavours have produced multiple results in constructing contemporary China’s culture, politics and economy. As a folklorist, my concern is how we evaluate this process of preservation, reconstruction and invention of tradition in a modernization-driven process. Does this interactive process of culture, politics and economy produce both positive and negative results within the continuity of tradition, reflecting Nancy Munn’s statement that positive transformations are dialectically formed in tension with negative or negative-subversive transformations (Munn 1986:26)? Are contemporary workings of tradition just an instrument of tourism, or have they earned their own values and meanings in culture, politics and economy? What role have various social forces played in this process and produced multiple products of tradition in the construction of contemporary social life? In the following, I will give a multi-level account of the state, local community/village, and individuals,
from which I attempt to discover the relationships of culture and economy, tradition and modernity, and the role of the state, local government, and ordinary people in this process.

**The Modernization of Jixian in the Chinese Tourism Boom**

A famous Chinese saying, “Tian shi, di li, ren he,” derived from Mengzi, a Confucian classic compiled in two thousand years ago, means that a success is affected by the factors of right time, right place, and harmony. Jixian’s radical development from a traditional agriculture society to a prosperous modern tourism destination in recent decades depends on all of these factors.

The implementation of “reform and opening” policies from the central government of China provides Jixian a positive social climate in which to pursue new opportunities. From the 1980s forward, the carrying out of reform policies has released the local agencies, production units, and individuals from various strict controls under the centrally planned social economic system that lasted from the 1950s to the 1970s. The new policies for promoting rural area development of China have continuously come out along with the deepening of the reform, from the 1980s’ replacement of the commune system with the household responsibility system (bao chan dao hu), to the 1990s’ growth of township business and marketization, to the 2000s’ abolition of agricultural tax, development of green agriculture and rural tourism, and the new countryside construction. These policies have spurred rural people to seek innovate ways to improve their local economy as well as individual’s life qualities. With this positive social climate in China, based on its local potential (natural resources, cultural heritage, as well as traditional agriculture) Jixian boosted its local developmental strategies in tourism and established the goal to construct a modern, middle-class tourism destination.
The local development in the most recent two decades demonstrates that, on the one hand, tourism is a vehicle for Jixian to facilitate its modernization process, and to use local cultural resources to construct contemporary social life; on the other hand, cultural heritage and tradition have been reframed and gained new functions and values in modern tourism development. Thus, in the Jixian case, cultural tradition and heritage inform cultural tourism; cultural tourism is the dynamics of revitalizing and inventing cultural traditions. By means of presentation, re-mediation, and “traditionalization” of tradition through preservation, presentation, and innovation activities in the modern tourism development process, the value and meaning of tradition has been reoriented and reframed, and such a social process has also created power for local communities to reframe their socio-cultural values, ideology, identity, lifestyle, economic pattern, and social condition.

Tourism is booming new industry in China. In the ancient world, touring mountains, rivers, or any distant place was just a small amount of literary person’s aesthetic inclinations. In the 20th century, after China entered the modern era, for a long time, tourism in China was just a kind of rare diplomatic activity to serve political goals. From the 1950s to the 1970s, domestic tourism wasn’t encouraged and was even considered a bourgeois capitalist life style contrary to communist ethics (Zhang 2003: 15). Since the late 1970s, the nation has shifted direction from political struggle to economy and modernization construction. The change of state policies and economic development plans coincided with the trends of globalization and the rapid development of new technologies in the world. The improvements in travel facilities and transportation have stimulated the fast growing global tourism industry. Meanwhile, the United Nations World Tourism Organization advocates the development of tourism as a primary socio-
economic tool for sustainable development and as a key agent in fight of global poverty
(UNWTO 2008).

Under this global tendency, in 1986 the national government of China declared tourism to be a comprehensive economic activity with the direct purpose of earning foreign exchange for China’s modernization. For the first time ever, tourism was included in China’s national plan for social and economic development. Tourism was seen to require less investment, earning quickly, with better efficiency, and had a greater potential to improve people’s livelihood than many other tertiary service sectors (Zhang 2003: 25). Since the 1990s, the central government has issued several policies to boost domestic and international tourism, as an instrument to stimulate consumption and economic development and fight poverty in backward areas. At a national economics conference called by the Central Committee of the CCP in December 1998, it was clearly stated that tourism should be considered a new growth point of the national economy (Zhang 2003: 27). With the purpose of stimulating tourism by encouraging people to travel, a long weekend policy was carried out; weeklong holidays were first introduced in 1992. Starting in 1999, three nation-wide weeklong holidays were established around May 1 (May Labor Day), October 1 (National Day), and the lunar Chinese New Year in January or February.

Since 2000, successful economic reforms, combined with an increase in disposable money and more openness to the outside world—exemplified by joining the World Trade Organization—have triggered a faster-than-ever growth of Chinese tourism industry. According to the forecast by the World Tourism Organization, by the year 2020, China will become the top international destination country in the world with about 137 million international arrivals. Based on the WTO’s bright forecasts, the China National Tourism Administration (CNTA) developed the “10th Five Year Plan and Long-Term Goal Outline up to 2015 and 2020 for
Tourism Development in China” (CNTA 2001). The specific quantitative goals set in the plan include that by 2020, China will have 210 to 300 million in-bound tourist arrivals, 2.5 to 3.6 times greater than in 2000. Among them, “foreign” tourist arrivals will reach 31 to 45 million, 3 to 4.4 times greater than that of 2000 (Zhang and Lew 2003: 6). As Zhang points out, China’s vast area, diverse landscapes, ancient history, rich culture, and distinctive political and economic systems constitute China’s tourism resources. China can compete with other destinations in international tourism by giving full play to its comparative advantages in cultural and historical resources (Zhang 2003: 30).

Jixian’s Potential for Developing Cultural Tourism

Jixian’s unique natural geography and cultural history provide it with advantages to develop tourism as a way to facilitate local modernization. Jixian’s landscapes consist of mountains, lakes, spectacle rocks, and flat plains. Its unique geographic feature is caused by ancient crustal movement. About 1.95 billion years ago, the Yan Mountain where Jixian is located had a strong earth crustal movement caused by sedimentation. As a result, the region formed a sedimentary sea. The thickness of marine deposits formed into the world-famous “Mesoproterozoic Section” (中上元古界地层剖面). About 0.8 billion years ago, seawater receded, and land formed. The northern area remained dry land; the south moved back to sea again. Until 0.225 billion years ago, seawater completed receded from the whole Jixian area. About 70 million years ago, the Yan mountain Mesozoic movement (中生代燕山运动) exerted a major influence to the basic outline of Jixian’s landscape. The crustal movements lifted the North mountain area, and caused the Southern region to fracture and sink, where it gradually accumulated into the plain. Thus, Jixian’s landscape features a north high with mountains and a
south low with the lake. The famous mountains in the north of Jixian are the Pan Mountain, the Fujun Mountain, the Jiushanding, the Baxian Mountain, the Huangyaguan xi Mountain, etc. Four mountain valleys pass through the northern mountains. In the southern plains, there is a vast lake called Cuiping Lake, thirty kilometers long and eight kilometers wide, with a total area of 135 square kilometers. In the 1960s, a grand dam called Yuqiao shui ku was built on the lake between Mt. Fenghuang and Mt.Cuiping for the purpose of preventing flood and irrigation. This construction makes Cuiping Lake more magnificent and graceful.

The splendid natural landscape is complemented by Jixian’s proud history and numerous ancient architectural features. An old Chinese saying tells us that “Where there is a mountain, there is a temple.” Multi-religious temples such as Taoism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Catholicism have settled down in Jixian and influenced local culture. The local gazetteers Jizhou zhi and Minguo Jixian zhi recorded over a hundred temples from different religions scattered throughout the region of Jixian. Buddhist temples operated in Jixian from the Wei and Jin period (220–420), and flourished from the Tang to the Qing. Just in the Pan Mountain area, there were about 72 temples as well as Buddhist pagodas, although most of them have been destroyed due to war fires or other reasons. A few of temples have been rebuilt in recent decades, such as Tiancheng Temple, Yunzhao Temple, and Qianxiang Temple (Jin 2006: 35–39). In Jixian town, ancient Buddhism temples Dule and the White Pagoda from the Liao dynasty were listed on the national key relic protection lists. There are also other ancient structures such as Ming’s Drum Tower (gu lou), the Daoism’s Luban Temple, the Confucian Wen Temple, etc.

Numerous eminent historical figures have left traces in Jixian. A local legend tells that the earliest Chinese ancestor and emperor called Huang Di (黄帝) visited the Mt. Kongdong (now called Mt. Fujun) to find the sage Guang Chengzi in order to ask about the wisdom of
“Tao.” The Tang dynasty poet Chen Ziang wrote a poem “北登蓟丘望，求古轩辕台。尚思广成子，遗迹白云隈。” (Climbing up Ji hill from the north, looking for the relics of Huang Di. /Thinking about Guang Chengzi, leaving the traces in clouds.) (Jin 2005: 187). This reflects on this historic legend. Numerous great poets in Chinese history, such as Li Bai, Du Fu, Bai Juyi, Chen Ziang, Gao Shi, Han Yu, Wang Changling, Meng Haoran etc. all wrote poems about Jixian.

In the Qing dynasty, the Qing imperial tomb site built in Zunhua, in the east of Jixian, called Qing dong ling (the East Imperial Tomb). Jixian was on the route of the royal annual memorial services. During the sixty years of the Qianlong period of the Qing dynasty (1735-1795), the emperor Qianlong passed by Jixian numerous times and visited the Pan Mountain thirty-two times. There were five temporary imperial palaces in Jixian, which were used for the emperor to take a rest when worshiping his ancestors in the Qing Imperial Tomb: Baijian palace in the west of town, Jingji palace in the Pan Mountain area, Dule Temple palace inside Dule Temple town, Taohua Temple palace east of town, and Longfu Temple palace near the Qing tomb site (Jin 2005:157-159). It is said that Emperor Qianlong wrote a thousand poems about Jixian and left many calligraphy inks inside temples. Now, in the Dule Temple temporary dwelling palace, there are 28 pieces of stele and 107 poems by Qianlong displayed around the stele corridor.4 In addition, Jixian’s geographic location is considered the east fort of the capital Beijing, thus the Huangyaguan section of the ancient Great Wall was rebuilt in the Ming dynasty in the northwest of Jixian, just 28 km away from the center town. The famous Ming general Qi Jiguang defended invaders at the Huangyaguan portion of the Great Wall and left many legends. Historic figures, local literature, and ancient relics—all these have contributed to Jixian’s rich cultural treasures.
Besides the unique natural environment and the pride of historic cultural relics, the local agricultural heritage constitutes another resource for local tourism development. Nowadays agricultural tradition and rural lifestyle have become valuable to the modernized urban society. By means of preserving and presenting rural tradition, rural village life that used to be tagged as “backwardness” is now commonly endowed with the new title of “live traditional culture,” which provides urban visitors and younger generations another environment, to fulfill new functions, allowing peasants to escape poverty and build a future through developing modern agriculture and a rural leisure tourism industry.

**Jixian’s Strategies: Utilization of Tradition and Innovation of Culture**

In the early 1980s, when I took a long-distance bus from Beijing to Jixian on weekends, the coach ran on a rugged road. I felt a bit dizzy, even sick, from sitting on it for three or four hours. In the terminal, the crowded, smoky, and loud in waiting area caused me to leave soon. My relative came to pick me up at the station and rode a bike, carrying me over the rugged earth road. Inside the station or in the street, I heard people talking with local dialect. I saw no tourists in town except for those who visiting relatives or doing business.

For my 2011 fieldwork trip, I still took a long-distance bus from Beijing to Jixian, but this time it ran on the well-constructed Jing-Ji highway took less than 2 hours. The old station no longer existed; instead, a grand new Jixian transport station, *Jixian ke yun zhan*, was built outside of downtown close to a highway exit and the Pan Mountain Park. The new location obviously shows an attempt to provide easy access to Jixian for outside visitors and to connect Jixian with outside world. The building was designed in a modern style, like a bird opening its wings. I assumed it might symbolize Jixian as a bird flying fast toward its bright future. Inside the station,
there were three separated areas: a ticketing area, a seating area, and a shopping area. There were large digital LCD screens on the walls for displaying ticket prices and schedules. When China opened its door in the 1980s, foreigners who visited China often complained that it was difficult to find an acceptable restroom, like one in their home countries, in public areas. Dirty, smelly and without privacy, public toilets on the streets left visitors with bad experiences. Later, the Chinese government realized that to support the openness policy and to appeal to more tourists from around the world, traditional facilities needed to be modernized and fundamental infrastructure needed to be improved. Thus, road construction and toilet improvement were commonly undertaken from the 1990s in the tourist destinations of China. Nowadays in the Jixian terminal station, travelers use international standard restrooms: privacy, water flush, and hand washers. It is clean, comfortable, and demonstrates Jixian’s modernization.

Although Jixian objectively contains natural beauty and a rich cultural heritage, these were only appreciated by the Emperors and elites in the past. For ordinary locals, mountains, lakes, and rivers did not bring them a rich life, but many disasters like droughts and floods. Under the traditional agricultural economy, people still lived in poverty. The north lacks water for growing crops, and the lower south was often flooded. The ancient structures were mostly destroyed in wars, and local people suffered losses. After the PRC was established, to prevent severe draught and flood, several huge irrigation works were built during the period of the commune corporation. In July of 1960, the biggest local irrigation project, “the Yuqiao Reservoir,” was completed in the Cuiping lake area (Jin 2006: 22). The construction effectively works for reserving water and defending against draught and flood, so it is good for protecting traditional agriculture. The strict state control and planned economy management from the 1950s to the 1970s continues this production model. Actually, this model is not suitable for enhancing
the local economy: hard cultivation with low return. Although mining rocks had been a supplemental economy for local mountain people, it consumed natural resource and destroyed the natural environment. Moreover, under the old economic model, local natural and cultural potential still could not be used to produce benefits for local communities.

In the wave of fast growth of global and domestic tourism and a national wide modernization movement, developing tourism is a wise strategy for a local government. This strategy has led Jixian from a traditional agriculture society to the front of the modern tourism industry, and it has significantly changed the local economy, culture, and social environment. So far, tourism development in Jixian can be divided into two phases: the initial development phase from the early 1980s to the late 1990s, and the second phase with full planning and innovation development from the 2000s to the present. Throughout these phases, a central ideal is to utilize Jixian’s natural and cultural heritage resources to promote modernization and to improve local social, cultural, and economic conditions.

The initial development period can be traced back to the early 1980s. On May 10, 1980, the most notable ancient structure, the Dule temple, officially opened to domestic and foreign tourists. In the past, the Dule temple had been used as a religious site, imperial palace, military camp, school, administrative offices, and so on. Ancient architecture experts and historians investigated the Dule temple for its precious values of architecture, art, and history (Song 2007). The Dule Temple officially opening to tourists marks a reconsideration of the role and value of the Dule Temple for local social and economic development on the part of the department of Chinese cultural relics and local government. Besides the Dule temple, Jixian local authority also restored and opened other noted cultural relics, such as temples in Pan Mountain. The most important temple, Tianchong temple in Pan Mountain, was restored in March 1982 and opened to
tourists. The largest Pan Mountain temple, Wansong temple that was destroyed by the Japanese army during the Sino-Japanese War was rebuilt in 1988 (Jin 2006: 35). Thus, in this initial period, local tourism development focused on using local ancient cultural relics to appeal to domestic and international tourists.

In the 1980s, although China launched national plans to speed up economic development and modernization, officials were still exploring ways to establish a market economy. Tourism had not played a significant role in local business. Meanwhile, another trend in the 1980s—responding to the disaster of the Cultural Revolutions—saw the revival of cultural traditions on a conscious level, either politically or culturally. That is to recover and reconnect to the past to repair the fractured Chinese cultural tradition and to unify Chinese around the world in an effort to modernize the country. In a search for cultural roots, ancient cultural relics regained their honor as a valuable legacy and treasure. Thus, during this phase, to re-establish the pride of local cultural history and to protect cultural relics were the main purposes of these restoration projects. Local cultural preservation efforts were mainly administrated by the Jixian Cultural Relics Institution (Jixian wen wu suo) and the Jixian Cultural House (Jixian wen hua guan). In the 1990s, some larger projects were further engaged. For example, in March of 1990 the National Cultural Relics Bureau authorized a large restoration project for the Dule Temple. From 1990 to 1998, the Dule Temple was thoroughly restored. In October of 1998, the National Cultural Relics Bureau and experts in ancient architecture came to Jixian to inspect the completed maintenance project.

A notable phenomenon in the 1990s was that Chinese society fully concentrated on the market and economic development. A popular saying, “Everyone runs business,” reflects the social condition of the 1990s in China. During this period, doing business and earning economic
profit became a common interest from the industrial sector to the cultural sector. Along with this social tendency, Jixian’s tourism started to seek potential economic returns from local cultural relics. Admission fees and commercial shops operated concomitantly with cultural relic management. The pass for visiting the Dule Temple increased from 1 yuan, to 5 yuan, to 10 yuan, and eventually to 40 yuan. Meanwhile, other types of tourism, such as guest housing at farms and folk village tours, also occurred. Rural tourism uses local traditional agricultural resources to attract urban tourists and earn benefits for the local rural economy. In 1994, Changzhou cun, a village in the north mountain region of Jixian, launched the first rural tour in Jixian County. Developing village tourism was seen as a strategy to change the poor life conditions of households in rural mountain villages.

From the 2000s to the present, Jixian’s tourism development has entered a new phase. In this phase, tourism has become an independent pillar of the local economy. The local government administration has collaborated with the cultural and relic sector, tourism sector, commercial sector, and construction sector to engage in a fully planned local cultural tourism development. The general developmental plan was designed by the Jixian government in accordance with the central government’s guidelines.

The general guidelines for developing local tourism as a strategy of rural social and economic development was promulgated in a May 26, 2006 speech by the director of the China National Tourism Administration, Shao Qiwei, in the national conference of the Tourism Development in Small Towns. In his speech, Shao stated that promoting tourism development in small towns of China is an effective way for the construction of the new socialist countryside, which is a very important strategy for the central government and the CCP leadership. This strategy was proposed during the Fifth Plenary Session of the 16th Congress of the CCP. To
develop tourism in small-towns, local administrations need to guide tourists to suitable areas, to closely integrate tourism into the construction of small towns, and to promote comprehensive functions of tourism so as to accelerate and coordinate the comprehensive development of local economy, society, and culture. He also indicated that developing tourism in small towns may give full play to the linkage advantages and diffusing functions of the tourism industry, and it can also promote local first and second industries and increase the value of agricultural products, which would gather various capital and resources to small towns. In his speech, he emphasizes that most tourism resources in China are in rural and mountain areas, so tourism developed in these areas can accelerate infrastructure construction, improve ecological environment, expand cooperation with the outside, and generate beneficial results in employment, culture, and education (Shao 2006).

According to the national guidelines, in 2006, Jixian’s local government also proposed an ambitious plan to promote tourism. This plan can be read in an article written by former Jixian County’s top leader, the party secretary Ci Shucheng, titled, “Using Cultural Innovation as Dynamics to Accelerate the Construction of a Tourism City” (以文化创新为动力加快旅游城市建设步伐), which was posted on the website of the Jixian Travel Bureau on December 12, 2006. In this article, Ci Shucheng emphasizes two aspects of tourism: utilization of cultural resources (文化利用) and innovation in local cultures (文化创新).

Firstly, Ci points out that Jixian contains precious heritage resources including natural heritage and cultural heritage that form the foundation of cultural innovation. Neglecting this point means that dialogue about cultural continuity, development, and innovation would be empty talk. By 2006, on the list of notable cultural relics in Jixian, there were one the world class cultural heritage, two the national level, fifteen city level, and thirty-seven county level protected
cultural relic units, as well as 325 cultural relic spots. There were also five national natural reserves. Based on this view, Ci Shucheng addresses the proper ways of developing Jixian by using local cultural resources and cultural innovation. He states, “It is based on the advantage of Jixian’s history and cultural heritage, we set up the developing goal for Jixian that to construct Jixian as a moderate tourism city. To achieve this goal, we need to use modern ideas to inherit our history and culture. By means of cultural innovation, the advantage of the history and culture can be transferred into industrial advantage, economic advantage, and in the end to improve Jixian overall” (Ci 2006).

In his article, Ci points out advantages in local development through the interaction of culture and economy. On the one hand, cultural resources and tourism projects could attract capital investments from outside, make general improvements to the local economy, and promote Jixian’s new countryside construction. He points out that the Hengda Corporation invested 8.6 billion RMB in the Pan Mountain project to construct the Pan Mountain Jinbi international conference center, which involves more than ten villages in the area. The company will provide modern residence and employment to local villagers. In his estimation, this project will change the mountain villages’ economic condition. On the other hand, through cultural innovation, embedding cultural content into the beautiful natural environment will enhance the appeal of local tourism and facilitate interactions between culture and economy. Ci suggests that culture is the soul of tourism. This is why the local government has made a large investment to restore ancient relics.

Finally, Ci points out four concrete strategies regarding “cultural utilization and innovation.” 1) Intensify awareness of the need to protect of historic cultural resources including tangible and intangible cultural heritage. Cultural heritage should be preserved in its original
status as possible. Protection is the pre-condition of development and utilization. Utilization can make the value of heritage. 2) Make Jixian a famous historic cultural town by using particular local cultural resources and engaging cultural innovation. The concrete methods include: applying for inclusion in the lists of the world heritage and the national heritage, which would enhance the local reputation; accelerating the construction of Jixian’s cultural tourism zone in the old town so as to rebuild the ancient Tang style street around the Dule Temple and to restore the old town walls; enhancing features of Jixian’s local cultures, such as the Buddhist culture at Pan Mountain and the Dao culture at Mt. Fujun; creating some fine cultural tourism productions at the Dule Temple, Pan Mountain, the Huangyaguan Great Wall, and “the Mesoproterozoic section” at the national geology park. 3) Develop culture programs to fit the economic demands of local tourism. He suggests that collaboration between the tourism department and the cultural department, and the inclusion of cultural performances on tourism sites is an effective way to communicate local cultural knowledge to tourists. 4) Develop cultural industry. Jixian has a rich folk culture, including such practices as clay sculpture, paper cutting, painting, and folk drama. These have great potential to become cultural industrial productions. Clay sculpture Master Yu Qingcheng achieved a high reputation both domestically and internationally. This significant cultural brand can be used to develop a powerful Jixian clay sculpture industry (Ci 2006).

Over all, this article provides an insightful view on utilizing local potential and cultural heritage to facilitate Jixian’s modernization through interaction between culture, economy, and social construction. I notice that in the article Ci Shucheng initially localizes the concept of “cultural innovation (文化创新),” which he views as the key in inheriting local cultural heritage and taking full advantages of local natural and cultural resources to achieve the goal of making Jixian a modern tourism destination. Although this article was written by a Jixian’s local leader
in China, the idea proposed in it corresponds to American scholar Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett’s idea expressed in her influential article “Theorizing Heritage.” She writes, “Heritage produces something new in the present that has recourse in the past.” Heritage is a "value added" industry (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1995: 369). As a local leader in Jixian, Ci Shucheng’s article not only represents his idea, but also represents the idea of Jixian’s local government. It is actually a guideline for Jixian County to work on preserving local culture heritage and using heritage to promote local modernization.

From my fieldwork in 2011, I observed that the series of plans proposed in Ci’s article has been carried out, and many projects had been completed by the time I was there. They can be summed up as follows: 1) Establishing cultural theme tours. The cultural themes were centered on Dule Temple and the Qing imperial dwelling palaces; rural cultural tours emphasized local village life and local cultural specialties; folk art and craft tours focused on clay sculpture, stone art, root carving, and gourd painting. 2) Restoring ancient cultural relics. Besides restorations of the Dule Temple, the Tiancheng Temple, the Baita temple, the Luban temple, and the Wen temple, a series of new construction projects such as the re-construction of the ancient town, Drum Tower Square, Mt. Fujun Park, and the ancient style entry of Pan Mountain were completed and opened to tourists.

3) Embedding natural resources with cultural ingredients. For example, the Eight Immortal Beings (Baxian) Mountain natural reserve zone has been famous for its natural forest, valley, spring, and billion-year-old rocks and geologic features. In the past, it contained the Qing imperial tomb park banned zone. During the wars of the early 20th century, the natural forest was destroyed and burned. After the PRC was established, the zone was managed by a forest farm, and the forest ecologic environment gradually recovered. In 1995, with the approval of the
central government, the Eight Immortal Beings (Baxian) Mountain was upgraded to a national reserve zone and managed by the Tianjin Baxian Mountain Natural Reserve Administration. Since June 1996, the region has become a forest park and tourist destination. While keeping the splendid natural landscape with the forest, rock formations, and springs, the Baxian Mountain Natural Reserve Administration also uses images derived from the legends of the Eight Immortal Beings to decorate the park, to enrich the content of the tour zone. They use the Eight Immortal Beings’ stories to name the land spots in the zone, such as “Gathering Peak of the Immortal Beings,” “Eight Immortal Beings Spring,” and “Eight Immortal Beings Rock.” They also built a series of ancient-style structures on the site with names such as “Eight Immortal Beings Table,” “Eight Immortal Beings Pavilion,” and so on. This creative work endows the nature reserves with cultural imagery, which makes them more attractive and meaningful to tourists.

4) Developing rural village cultural programs and farmer’s guesthouses. Jixian’s government encourages local villages that have the potential for running tourism to develop some particular culture product based on their own environment, resources, and cultural tradition. The aim was that “one village, one particular cultural product; one area, one particular custom” (一村一品，一域一俗). Under this designation, local villages have engaged to develop their particular cultural focus. For example, Yushi village has been focusing on clay sculpture craft; Xijingyu village stresses on stone cultural tradition. Guojiagou village develops gourd culture and craft. Dapingan village focuses on developing folk painting and root carving arts. Sunge Zhuang village stresses the Manchu culture. Maojiayu village works on the theme of longevity.
Figure 3.1 Jixian county tourism map. Source: Jixian Travel Bureau website

Regarding the notion of “cultural utilization and innovation,” there is an inquiry that whether or not using cultural heritage and spurring cultural innovation to promote tourism would produce pseudo-culture and ruin authentic cultural heritage. In his study of Tibetan cultural tourism in Shangri-La, Yunnan, Shield Kolås points out that, from the perspective of the tourist, tourism may seem to foster pseudo-cultural production; however, from the local perspective, “tourism may rather heighten senses of community and identity, as new meanings of ‘culture’ are negotiated and new notions of ‘place’ are made real” (Kolås 2008: 129). Through implementing these projects, Jixian’s social environment from the central town to the villages has greatly changed, and cultural landscapes have become significant. In downtown, the ancient structures, reconstructed ancient streets, and modern buildings make up multi-style scenery. In villages, besides general improvement of villager’s dwellings, commonly, there are particular
village cultural signs built in the center of a village such as a gate, a display wall, and a square.

The changes affect not only in the physical environment, but also in people’s awareness of their natural and cultural resources and agricultural tradition. With the growing awareness, actions have been taken from Jixian’s top leadership to grassroots villagers. From these actions, natural resources have been transformed into local cultural products, and the rural agriculture in many places has been transformed into agricultural tourism. These actions have changed traditional farm life and bring farmers high returns. The profit from tourism has become important local economic resources. In 2009, tourism income raised to sixteen percent of the total GDP of Jixian County. The prosperous local tourism industry has inspired people’s cultural creativity. It appears that the local cultural development guidelines advocated by the local government has become the people’s voluntarily actions. Economic benefits from tourism have stimulated people’s interest in invention of local cultural products. These cultural inventions can be observed in many local practices, from festivals to farmer’s markets, from seasonal temple fairs to daily town square performances, from farmer’s guesthouses to village crafts. They continuously enhance and enrich the content of local cultural tourism.

During my writing of this dissertation, I notice that the Jixian travel bureau website recently added new content introducing local products to tourists. These products include traditional local food and fruit, local crafts, and also recently innovated folk art and craft products that are made of special local natural environment resources, for example, stratified stone art, root carving art, and purple sand calligraphy and painting. The purple sand calligraphy and painting (also called ye yan shu hua 页岩书画) was invented by a native peasant Zhang Yinghui from Xiaying township. Zhang Yinghui spent ten years finding the right technique and finally succeeded in perfecting this unique, elegant, handmade folk art. It uses local purple sand
minerals, that formed anywhere from 1.3-1.7 billion years ago, which are run through several processing procedures of selecting, grinding, painting, coloring, and drying. The traditional Chinese cultural motives presented by this special material look very quaint. In 2003, Zhang Yinghui’s ye yan shu hua was awarded 2nd place in the Tianjin Folk Art Competition. In 2009, he obtained a patent on the handcraft technique. In 2010, ye yan shu hua was selected by Tianjin Tourism Administrative as a recommended local featured tourism souvenir.6

![Figure 3.2 Ye yan painting Wen Dao (based on a local legend). Source: jx-travel.com](image)

**The Rise of Rural Leisure Tours and Folk Village Projects in Jixian**

Notably, local innovations can also be observed in developing rural leisure tours in the course of the new countryside construction. Rural leisure tourism is newly developed based on Jixian’s natural environment and traditional agriculture heritage. The targeted tourist group is urban people from Beijing and Tianjin. In the Jixian case, developing village leisure tourism has been demonstrated as an effective way improving villagers’ life condition and facilitating rural modern development. For instance, in the past Maojiayu was a small, poor village located in the Jiulong Mountain area. In 2001, villager leader Li Suo and the forty-six households in the village sought to develop village tourism to increase income for the village. Since no cultural relics were
found in Maojiayu except for the natural mountain forest and fresh air, the villagers thought to develop tourism themed on longevity (长寿) that fit contemporary urban tourists’ desire to escape the environmental pollution that has become a serious concern in big cities along with the fast urban developments in recent decades. In the initial phase, Li Suo and villagers put down their own money to build a 1.6 km smooth pitch road to connect the village to the outside world. They upgraded their own houses to run as guesthouses. Then, they collaborated with outside investors to develop local attractions such as the Marvelous Proterozoic Stone Site and the Tai Chi Health Base. Through these endeavors, the village has made big changes. The annual income per villager, which was less than 2000 Yuan in 2000, increased to 30,000 Yuan by 2008. While tourists enjoy the tour programs in the village—which include the Happy Senior Farm Tour and Tasting Farmer’s food—Maojiayu villagers have also modernized their living conditions. Now every household owns computers, phones, televisions, air conditions and comfortable homes (Jixian lu you wang 2009).

In order to administrate the fast-growing local countryside tourism, the Jixian Tourism Bureau set up a special Rural Tourism Office. When I was in Jixian, I visited this office and learned the general state of local rural tourism from talking with the office staff. They provided me two Jixian government documents. One is a Jixian government publication called “Tianjin shi Jixian xiu xian nong ye yu xiang cun lu you fa zhan qing kuang” (Developmental Status of Tianjin Jixian Leisure Agriculture and Village Tourism; 天津市蓟县休闲农业与乡村旅游发展情况) dated November 8, 2010. The other document is “Jixian nong jia le lu you fa zhan gui hua” (Jixian Village Happy Tour Development Plan; 蓟县农家乐旅游发展规划), dated in 2007, which was completed by Beijing Dawosi Tourism Planning Institute entrusted by the Jixian government.
According to the “Developmental Status of Tianjin Jixian Leisure Agriculture and Village Tourism,” Jixian’s leisure agricultural and village tourism was initially launched at the end of 1980s. It has experienced four phases: spontaneous emergence, guided development, growth, and standardized enhancement. The village tourism grew from just a few villages and households to a much larger enterprise nowadays, with a “hundred villages that have established tourism, a thousand households that run tour business and over ten thousand farmers who participate in leisure agricultural tourism.” By 2010, forty-two percent rural villages in the county had participated in village tourism. Ninety thousand farmers had worked in village tourism business directly or indirectly. More than three hundred thousand farmers had received benefits from the village tourism business. In 2009, the number of leisure agricultural tourists reached 4.08 million. The income earned from the agricultural tourism is six hundred million RMB.

The leisure agricultural tourism in Jixian typically includes four businesses: 1) Household based farmer’s guesthouses. As of 2010, eight hundred seventy five households were selected at the city level and five hundred households were selected at the county level as farmer’s guesthouses in Jixian County. The farmer’s guesthouse provides to urban tourists with rural style traditional housing accommodation, local farm food, and real farm life experience, mostly on weekends and holidays; 2) Farm gardens and fishing ponds for tourists’ self-picking and self-fishing activities. As of 2010, there were three thousand acres of established fruit picking gardens, eight hundred acres of vegetable picking gardens, and fifty fishing ponds in Jixian County; 3) Farm tourism markets. Jixian rural aims at developing “one village, one product” selected from green ecologic healthy food products, mountain products, and famous local fruit such as Pan Mountain persimmons, Tianjin chestnuts, Huangyaguan sweet pears, Jizhou jujubes,
and walnuts. Processed fruit drinks and canned food made from special local agricultural products also came out in local farm tourism market. An article on the Jixian Travel Bureau website, “Jixian Investment Environment” states that by 2010, two “one village, one product” flagship stores, eighteen directing selling stores in town, and sixty five farm tourism markets around the area had been established for tourists to purchase local special products; income from the farmer’s market reached forty-eight million RMB; 4) Particular village crafts and performances. According to the Jixian government guidelines, by means of “using culture to promote tourism (以文兴旅)” and “one village, one particular cultural product（一村一品）,” many villages in Jixian County have been working on developing their one particular local cultural production based on local tradition and natural resources.

Local communities have created a special term for village tourism: nong jia le. Nong (farm) stresses the development of agricultural tourism products. Besides developing processed food products from coarse grain, fruit, and vegetables, the nong jia le program also stresses striking local rural cultural traditions and characteristics, such as holding traditional farm kitchen and craft competitions; promoting village tourist souvenir products like weaving, root carving, clay sculpture, rock art, gourd painting, paper cutting, needlework and embroidery; farm workshops demonstrating processes such as traditional farm tool use, bean processing shops, and mills. Jia (home) signifies the importance of building a friendly relationship between urban tourists and farm hosts, and offering tourists a farm home experience by foregrounding the idea that “Tourists and I are relatives.” Le (entertaining) stresses the various local cultural performances and programs that entertain and attract tourists’ participation. Example include folk wedding shows, farm New Year Festival programs, farmer home cooking competitions, rural photograph competitions, farmer play troupes, folk dances, and folk martial art shows. All
these activities attempt to enrich local cultural content, so as to enhance the quality of leisure agricultural and village tours.

Figure 3.3 Tourists in Guojiagou village. Photo by author, 2011.

To guide, support, and supervise local village tourism, the Jixian government has carried out a series of policies and acts. First, the government set up a fully functional leadership system to manage and supervise the village tours. A slogan advocated by the Jixian government declares that “the government leads, different departments collaborate, community people participate and work together to promote agricultural leisure tourism.”

In 2005, the Jixian government established the Jixian Village Tourism Leader Group. The head of the county was the director of the group. The group members were drawn from the departments of agriculture, tourism, police, commercial, public health, and environmental protection. The Jixian Tourism Bureau established a special office to administrate village tourism, and each xiang/zhen (township) and village also set up a tourism office. Thus, a three-level administrative system was formed to manage local village tourism.
Second, the Jixian government treated developing village tourism as a priority in the local development plans, and in its implementations. They tried to make a suitable plan to guide the whole developmental process. In 2007, the Jixian government assigned the Beijing Dawosi Tourism Designing Institution to compose a “Jixian Farm Home Tourism Development Plan,” a scheme with a full picture of multiple types of Jixian rural tourism based on local natural and cultural characteristics: Central Ancient Town; Western Pan Mountain new villages; Eastern mountain and water paradise; Northern Great Wall fort town; Southern plain green agriculture. The Jixian government proposed “Jixian Town and Rural General Development Plans 2010-2020.” The long goal is for Jixian to become “a leisure tourism destination from Beijing, Tianjin and Hebei; a base of green food production and supplies; a middle size modern tourism town.”

Third, the Jixian government made policies to give more support to tourism programs by means of financial investment and tax reduction policies. In October 2004, the Jixian government released an announcement titled, “A Decision about Stimulation and Support on Development of Farm Home Tourism,” which stated that the county government would provide special funds for the construction of rural infrastructure and support grants for households to run farm home based tourism business. To improve tourism facilities in Jixian rural areas, the Jixian government coordinated a capital investment of one billion RMB. This capital was used to build 1785 kilometers of major roads, 1785 kilometers of smooth pitch roads to replace rugged earth roads in villages, 180,000 square meters of parking lots, 51 public restrooms, 40 management and service centers for rural tourism, 423 kilometers of tap water pipe, and 3 hygiene treatment centers. In addition, all major roads and tourist destinations were set up with standard traffic signs, and all villages that run tourism established buried waste transfer stations and sewage disposal facilities.
To intensify standardized management, the Jixian government also enacted several regulations on the quality of the household tourism business. In 2001, the Jixian government posted “Jixian Farmer Home Tourism Service Quality Standards.” In 2004, an updated standard was released under the name of “The Jixian Farmer Home Tourism Management Temporary Regulations.” The villages and households promoting tourism were all graded and registered, and were inspected periodically. The Jixian Tourism Bureau also held village tourism training sessions periodically. From 2007 to 2010, fifteen thousand village tourism workers had attended the trainings, and fifty percent of them obtained relevant certificates. In order to promote farmer’s guesthouse food service quality and local food culture, a program called “Nong jia le chu yi da sai” (Happy Farmer Home Cooking Competition) has also been held annually by Jixian Travel Bureau in different villages. Participants are villagers who run farmer’s guesthouses across the Jixian County.

Figure 3.4 Jixian rural tourism. Photo by author, 2011.

In addition, the Jixian Tourism Bureau uses newspapers, television, the Internet, and other modern media to advertise Jixian’s rural tourism and enhance its reputation. Since the 1990s, several local tourism festival programs have been initiated by the Jixian government and
Jixian Travel Bureau, such as the Yuyang Golden Fall Tourism Festival in fall October, the Pear Garden Friendship Cultural Tourism Festival in April, the Huanyaguan Great Wall International Marathon Race in May, and the Mountain Products Fair in September. These local festivals have been held annually. In addition, the old traditional Dule Temple Fair was revived from 2003 and held each year during the winter Chinese New Year season.

In the future, the Jixian government plans to upgrade Jixian leisure agricultural tourism from “single household” operations to “full scenery” rural tourism that include theme villages, rural clubs, camp sites, village entertaining stages, food night markets, traditional food processing centers, and craft factories. The expecting goal for 2015 is to make all mountain areas and 40% plain areas into leisure agriculture and village tourism zone. Over eighty percent of farmer households will work directly or indirectly with the tourism industry.13

Encounters in Yushi Zhuang: Modern Tourism Changes the Village

My fieldwork year in Jixian in 2011 was just after the Jixian government released the general report about the development of Jixian’s leisure agriculture and village tourism, dated on November 8, 2010. This report provides a reference for me to compare what is in the report, what the actual situation is, and what has affected villagers’ life tradition in running the rural tourism business. Jixian’s former Party Secretary Ci Shucheng’s article “Using Cultural Innovation as Dynamic to Accelerate the Construction of the Tourism City” calls for “cultural utilization and cultural innovation” (文化利用，文化创新). The Jixian government proposed guidelines advocate that “using culture to promote tourism (以文兴旅)” and “one village, one particular cultural product; one area, one particular custom” (一村一品，一域一俗). They both embrace the idea of utilizing local culture resources and developing local culture to promote
local tourism economy and new countryside construction. Do these top-down guidelines take effect in the local township and villages’ implementation? Can culture be operated in this way that might only be seen in a socialist system like China? How do the grassroots in villages respond to these top down guidelines in the course of constructing their modern life? The stories from the village Yushi Zhuang provide some answers to these questions.

The Legends of Yushi Village

Nowadays, when tourists visit the famous Pan Mountain, they cannot miss a tourist spot that is next to Pan Mountain Park, called Shiqu Park (Shiqu Yuan 石趣园). Unlike Pan Mountain Park, Shiqu Park is privately owned by Yushi village because Yushi village committee and villagers invested, built, and managed Shiqu Park. In Chinese shi means stone and qu means amusing.

Yushi Zhuang (Zhuang means village) is a small mountain village located at the southern foot of Pan Mountain in Jixian. The whole village has 78 households and 280 people. The old tradition of Yushi Zhuang can be traced to a relationship to the mountain and stones. According to a record from the book Ri xia jiu wen kao («日下旧闻考»), Yushi Zhuang was originally called Luanshi Zhuang (乱石庄), which means a village with messy stones. The Qing Emperor Qianlong renamed the village Yushi (Jade stone) village (Yu 1983: 1885). A local legend also narrates that, in 1754, Emperor Qianlong’s temporary dwelling palace, Jingji Shan Zhuang, in Pan Mountain was built. Luanshi Zhuang was just next to the Jingji Shan Zhuang. One day, the emperor Qianlong went from the palace to the Luanshi Zhuang and saw that an old man was carving a dragon head on a stone inscription. The emperor Qianlong wondered at the man’s carving skill and the vivid dragon image on the stone, so he asked the old man for whom he made it. The old man said that it was made for the present emperor. Qianlong was very happy to
hear that and asked the old man why this village had such a poor name as Luanshi Zhuang when it produced so skillful a stone craftsman. The old man explained that there were messy stones in the north village. Then, Qianlong invited the old man to accompany him to see the messy stones. When they arrived there, Qianlong saw stones shaped like various animals, and he was touched by their magical nature. Qianlong decided to rename the village. When Qianlong returned to the Jingji Palace, he took a nap and dreamed that a deity flew him to the village again where he saw its beautiful natural scenery. After waking up, Qianlong gave the village a new name as Yushi Zhuang and also wrote a poem for it: “盘山乱石庄，喜逢神敲玉；赐名玉石庄，纳福增祥瑞。” (At the Messy Stone village of Pan Mountain, /I was delighted to meet a deity who was carving a jade stone; /I granted the place a name Yushi Zhuang (Jade village), /I wish the village fortune and happiness.) Afterward, the villagers’ life became better and better (Jin 2006: 231).

As a legend, this story contains some historical facts. The relic Jingji Shan Zhuang is indeed near the Yushi village. The emperor Qianlong did stop by this temporary dwelling palace for more than twenty times for the annual worship to the imperial tomb nearby Jixian. In addition, Yushi village is surrounded by mountain and stones. However, the Yushi people historically lived in poverty by planting crops, mining and selling stones and cement, so the Emperor Qianlong’s beautiful dream for Yushi village was not true in the real world.14

The real change to Yushi village happened during the new developmental era of China. In the national economic development wave, inspired by the idea of developing cultural tourism, from the early 1990s, Yushi village launched its tourism program. The village initiated and accomplished several huge projects: constructing Shiqu Park, creating a magnificent stone carving based on the Tang dynasty famous painting Portraits of 87 Immortal Beings, and reconstructing the ancient Buddhist Shifo Temple with a new name, Wanfo Temple. Wanfo
means ten thousand Buddhists. Besides utilizing its stone tradition, Yushi village also launched a new cultural program, clay sculpture. They invited famous local clay sculpture master Yu Qingcheng to Yushi village to establish a clay sculpture workshop and also built the Qingcheng Clay Sculpture Art Gallery in Shiqu Park. The villagers’ endeavors have transformed the village from a traditional farm village to a modern tourism enterprise. The messy stones of the past now are marvelous scenery that attracts numerous tourists. The cultural tourism enterprise has thoroughly changed Yushi village at every level, from the landscape to the villagers’ lives, aesthetics, and cultural values. My account of Yushi village comes from my visits the place and interviews with Yushi villagers, cadres, and tourism workers.

Yushi village lies away from the central town, about 12 km to the northwest of Jixian. It is affiliated with the Guan Zhuang district. My first visit to Yushi village was on February 24, 2011. There was no public transportation, but many private middle-size travel vehicles took passengers from Jixian town to Pan Mountain Park and Shiqu Park. They lined up at the “south juncture” of Jixian town. From my talk with a driver, I learned that such transportation business was part of the farm household tourism business. While his family members stayed at home to take care of the guesthouse business, he and his wife ran the transportation business. The ticket is 10 RMB ($1.62) per person. The driver told me that in the high tourism season, they could earn about 1000 RMB per day from this business. On the way, I told the driver I was going to visit Yushi village. I was surprised to hear him say, “You cannot find the old Yushi Zhuang any more. It is no longer exists. The new Yushi Zhuang is under construction.” “Where do the villagers live?” I asked. The driver replied, “The Yushi villagers are all scattered to other places temporarily. Some of them are in Shifo cun (village) and some of them in Lianhe cun. They rent temporary houses in these villages. If you want to find the Yushi villagers, you can take off at
Shiqu Park. The workers in the park are all Yushi villagers. The park administrative office and the village office are right on the site of the park either.” I followed the driver’s advice and left the transportation at the Shiqu Park stop.

My first glimpse of the place surprised me, too. To the south of the road, there was a large construction site. A frame of the residence buildings under construction with multi-floors already stood up. To the north of the road, there was a big parking lot. Crossing the parking lot, I saw a huge ancient-style entrance gate to Shiqu Park. Later, I checked the size of this building from the book *Jizhou feng wu zhi*. The main entrance gate was 6.16 meters in width, 8.12 meters in height with a pattern of “5 ji (spines) 4 po (slopes) and the wu palace style.” The side entrance was 2.77 meters wide and 4.83 meters high. In front of the entrance gate there were 18 steps made of granite, which were 22.25 meters wide and 4 meters high (Jin 2006). The gate looks magnificent.

Next to the entrance gate on the left side, I saw a row of two-story buildings built in ancient style. Each door had a sign hung on the outside with the name of the offices, such as the park management office, the Yushi committee’s office, and so on. It appeared that the village has had a well-established management system. The door of the Park Management Office was open and a woman sat in the office, so I went in and introduced myself. She seemed happy for my visit and handed me a business card: Zhang Xianyue, duty manager of Shiqu Park. For her, I might be the person who could either spread their village’s achievement to outside world or bring some marketing opportunities to the village because she soon made a call to the village’s clay sculpture program manager, Wang Zuozhong, and asked him come to meet me. She warmly offered me a cup of tea. At my request, she started to tell me the stories of Shiqu Park in
her village, Yushi Zhuang. “Our village has a great leader, so we have today’s achievement. The chief leader of our village Han Zhen is a great man!” she told me.

From her narratives, I learned that in the early 1990s, Yunshi Zhuang started to seek income through developing tourism. The village party secretary Han Zhen was the key figure in the new development of the village. With the support of central government policies, Han Zhen tried to find capital investment and loans of over 10 million RMB to conduct several big village projects, including the huge construction of Wanfo Temple, the carving of the Portrait of 87 Immortal Beings, Shiqu Park, and the Qingcheng Clay Sculpture Art Gallery. These completed projects have become the main income sources of the village economy. The loans are already paid off, and the village’s annual pure income from tourism is 1.5 million.

The villagers’ lives have greatly changed and improved. Ninety-five percent of villagers work in the tourism business. There were more than ten farmer’s guesthouses run in the village during the time that the old village existed. Each villager got a job in the village tourism enterprise, assigned by the village committee, such as parking lot attendant, tour guide, restaurant staff, park maintenance, guard, and clay structure workshop staff. Some villagers worked in the Shan ye ni ba Clay Sculpture Workshop inside Shiqu Park. Everyone received wages from the village committee. From the spring to the fall, the villagers worked outside at various tourism jobs. During the winter, the villagers amused themselves at home, but they still received wages. Men normally retired at age 60, and women at age 55. People beyond 60 years old receive a senior pension from the village committee. Some elders served in the temple as Buddhist followers. Almost all households owned a car. At the time of my visit in 2011, a big village project was to build a new village settlement. Each household could get a 450 m² modern dwelling from the new village properties. Under this plan, the residence area would build a
shopping center, a cultural entertaining center, a clay sculpture activity center, and a day care center. In Xianyue’s view, the one of goals declared by the central government to extinguish differences between rural and urban in the course of modernization of China has been realized in her village Yushi Zhuang.

During our talk, a tall and stout man came in. He was Wang Zuozhong, a leading craftsman in Yushi Zhuang and the manager of the Shan ye ni ba Clay Sculpture workshop in Shiqu Park. He wore a fashionable leather coat. His face showed confidence. After greeting each other, Wang Zuozhong invited me to go to his home to see his clay sculptures. In the winter season, the shan ye ni ba Clay Sculpture workshop was closed, so the village craftsman made crafts at home, and the village committee still paid them a wage. Because of the construction of the village settlement, Wang Zuozhong temporarily rented an apartment in the neighboring village Shifo cun. He drove a brand new car, taking Xianyue and me to his home. This was a very bright and modern style apartment, with bright windows and fine furniture. One room in his home was filled with his clay sculptures. I found that he almost always used rural life and rural people as his expressive subject. I asked, “How did you learn to make clay sculpture? Is it the tradition of your village?” He responded: “Our Yushi Zhuang didn’t have this traditional skill in making clay sculpture. This is a new thing influenced by Jixian’s well-known clay sculpture master Yu Qingcheng. However, I believe that making clay sculpture will become a tradition of our village. We are creating this tradition.”

From his account, I learned that to find a way to enrich cultural programs in the village tourism business, Yushi Zhuang’s leaders capitalized on Yu Qingchen’s clay sculpture. First, they imported Yu Qingchen’s works to Yushi village via build a Qingcheng Clay Sculpture Art Gallery in Shiqu Park. The gallery was built in 1994 with a 300,000 RMB capital investment.
Then they imported the craft skill to the village. With Master Yu Qingcheng’s help and the village committee’s support, the Yushi villagers started to learn to do clay sculpture. In 1999, the village held the first training session for making clay sculpture. Yu Qingcheng was the instructor. Wang Zuozhong attended this training session. The Yushi Zhuang committee also made relevant policies to encourage the villagers to participate the practice of making clay sculpture art. Villagers were free to attending clay sculpture training workshops and got free clay material. They also receive monthly wages from the village committee. Complete clay sculpture works were sold by the villagers’ themselves, and the earnings also belong to them. Spurred by these policies, many Yushi Zhuang’s villagers have become involved in the craft of clay sculpture. As of now, more than ten households in the village have become specialized in clay sculpture. Wang Zuozhong proudly stated to me, “Our generation creates Yushi Zhuang’s tradition of clay sculpture and we will gradually form a kind of Yu style.” From my understanding, Yushi Zhuang people have taken to clay sculpture, not only in an attempt to produce a kind of tourism booster and earn profits, but also as an attempt to make a local cultural identity, a significant cultural mark for the village.

Wang Zuozhong drove Xianyue and me back to Shiqu Park. Xianyue offered to take me to see Wanfo Temple next to Shiqu Yuan. The Wanfo Temple is another huge cultural product from Yushi villagers. The Wanfo Temple originally was Shifo temple and built in the Zhenguan period of the Tang dynasty (650). In the year Qianlong 27th of the Qing dynasty (1755), the temple was restored. Later it was burned in war. In 1993, the Yushi village committee decided to invest 500,000 RMB to rebuild the temple in a new location and renamed it Wanfo Temple. In 1995, Yushi Zhuang invested another 3.4 million RMB to add additional structures at the temple.
site. Now the temple yard consists of the main temple, the east sub-temple, and the west sub-temple, the wall screen, and the two temple structures of Tianwang and Daxiong (Jin 2006: 131).

![Image](image1.png)

Figure 3.5 Zhang Xianyue in front of the Wanfo Temple. Photo by author, 2011

The 99 steps were also built for visitors to climb up the hill to see the Buddha statues in the Wanfo dian. Xianyue took me to the ninety-nine steps and said, “Many pilgrims climb up each step with a knee bow or kowtow. The ninety-nine steps symbolize ninety-nine difficulties in human life. Pilgrims believe that after they cross up 99 steps, they could overcome all difficulties in their life.”

![Image](image2.png)

Figure 3.6 The 99 steps in the Wanfo Temple, Photo by author, 2011
Later, when I visited Wanfo Temple again during the fall tourism season, I saw that many visitors wore modern fashions, but they sincerely kowtowed through the ninety-nine steps. Did the Yushi villagers rebuild people’s belief as they rebuilt the object? Xianyue told me that during the construction of this temple, Yushi people tried hard to rebuild the temple with its over one thousand three hundred years of glorious history and sacred religious spirit by seeking out and collecting the original ancient temple material. In order to find the original remains of the Tang dynasty temple, Han Zhen and the villagers searched for two years and finally found some original temple stones, including the Buddha’s head, in local villagers’ yards where they were used as normal building materials by farmers. Xianyue pointed at the biggest Buddha statue on the center in the Wanfo Hall and said, “You see, the Buddha’s head and body are in different colors. The old yellow head is the original one and the body was made of the new material. We believe our Yushi village is protected by this thousand-year-old Buddha statue. Every year, during the New Year’s Eve as well as the Buddhism celebration days, all of our villagers come to worship Buddha. In the celebration, we offer free food to everyone, villagers, pilgrims, and guests, in our vegetarian restaurant.”

Then, Xianyue invited me to the restaurant just to the left side of the entrance of the Wanfo Temple. She said, “This is a pure vegetarian restaurant that our village built. It caters to the temple events, pilgrims, and tourists.” When I went inside, I saw a fine environment with some elegant decorations including calligraphy and Buddhist paintings. Some monks were eating lunch around a large round table. Xianyue invited me to sit down at another table where only one monk was eating. The meal to us was a bowl of rice and a fried, sliced dry bean curd. I talked with the monk at the table and learned that he was not a Jixian’s native. Xianyue explained that there were six monks in the temple. Some were invited from Tianjin’s temples by the village
committee. Some were just travelling here and could stay after being approved by the village committee. All the food in this restaurant was contributed by the Buddhist followers.

I realized that in running cultural tourism business, Yushi village committee has actually been dealing with a complex cultural project: building cultural objects, assigning tasks to villagers, organizing cultural events, recruiting cultural performers, and cultivating and gathering a cultural audience. In the hot economic developmental environment of China, these simple villagers learned how to either use old traditions or create new culture forms to serve their economic goals. Meanwhile, they also became cultural bearers and advocates. Xianyue’s own life story is instructive: She was actually not a Yushi Zhuang native. She only finished middle school. She settled in Yushi Zhuang because of her marriage. In 1997, she started to work in Shiqu Park. At the beginning, she was a sales clerk, and then she worked as a tour guide. She studied hard to learn relevant local history and religious customs that she did not have before. Because of her excellent performance, she was promoted to a park management position. Her life experience shows that the development of Yushi Zhuang changed a villager’s personal life. In pursuit of better life, villagers have learned how to use tradition and make culture. In these practices, culture and economy interact and are integrated.

After the lunch, I left Xianyue to look around Shiqu Park alone. The workshop and gallery in the Park were closed in winter. March was set as a work-training season for the villagers, and in April, these programs would return to normal. The villagers could enjoy their life at home in winter because they had earned enough money during the tourism seasons. Nearby the huge stone carving of Wu Daozi’s painting the Portraits of 87 Immortal Beings, I met another Yushi Zhuang villager, Gao Baisong. He was a pipe maintenance man in Shiqu Park. He told me that his older brother was the associate party secretary in the village and
worked with Han Zhen on the Shiqu Park project. Gao Baisong himself had worked in the village for twenty-nine years from the early 1980s and witnessed the changes to the village. He was very proud of his village’s creative works. The huge stone carving *the Portraits of 87 Immortal Beings* with an area of 3024 square meters (18 meters high and 168 meters wide) was made by using an abandoned dam. It holds the Shanghai’s Guinness World Record for the single largest portrait carving. When the village began this project, representatives went to Beijing to consult with the original Tang painting’s holder, the famous artist Xu Beihong’s wife, Ms. Liao Jingwen. They recruited the best carving craftsman from Quyang, Hebei, who worked on this carving for a whole year. They also wisely use TV and newspapers to advertise the village’s cultural tourism programs and attractions. Gao Baisong did not boast the achievement his village has made. In a pamphlet released by Yushi Zhuang Shiqu Park Tour Company in 2006, I found the following English description of the scenery of Shiqu Park:

There are the biggest Three Saint Buddhas made of stone in the Wanfo monastery where people offer sacrifices to them and 10960 units of lifelike Buddha statues that are said to be able to bless folks for safety and fortune. What is more exciting is that 3024-square-meter large petrogram (=rock painting) of ‘the Eighty-seven immortal beings’ demonstrates the outstanding appearance of China’s historic painting in a tremendous occasion, which has been recorded in the Guinness. The Qingcheng Art Gallery shows all masterworks by the namable master in arts and crafts called Yu Qingcheng who integrates the cultures of clay sculpture, villager and sexuality. There is still a scientific Sex Education Base that cultivates and enlightens those who are in lack of the knowledge. To tourists’ surprise, there are many rocks of suggesting human and animal forms on the superb Mountain Lingshi, in addition to which, the medicals stone bathing spot, saint spring of WanFo monastery, steam along cliffs and mountain brooks all contribute to the fabulous water scenery. Recording the history of ancient emperors and artists and the national slogan advocated during the War of Resistance against Japan, the stone inscriptions present an instructive theme for patriotism.

This description discloses that the tourism programs created and managed by Yushi village in Shiqu Park have multiple values and functions, not only on economic gain, but also embraced local cultural pride, history, patriotism and even brand new things such as sex education base because in Shiqu Park there was a controversial metal artwork called *Bang Bu Zhu* made by Yu
Qingcheng, which expresses the freedom of human nature. When the villagers transform the abandoned dam into an amazing stone carving artwork, when they use a modern vision to rebuild their homeland, they also transform themselves into modern constructive engineers, no longer “mian chao huang tu bei chao tian” (laboring in the field) illiterate peasants.

Interview with Yushi Village’s Hero Han Zhen

In my previous visits to Yushi Zhuang, the name Han Zhen had become familiar to me: a chief leader, the party secretary of the village, a founder of the village tourism enterprise, a brave entrepreneur in the reform era, a person who has directed the transformation of the village through a series large cultural projects and has made great contributions to improve the villagers’ lives. Almost all Yushi Zhuang people whom I spoke with told me that they felt lucky they had a good leader to help the village become prosperous.

One day, when I waited for a bus near Yushi village, I overheard two people talking about the matter of the village head election. They both were from the neighbor village of Guan Zhuang. The older of the two, a man who pulled a horse waiting for riders, complained that their village was poor since they lacked a good leader. The younger man responded that if they had a good leader like Han Zhen in Yushi Zhuang, Guang Zhuang village would be better now. After the younger man left, I asked the old man with whom he chatted. He explained that this man was from his village, but he had been hired by Yushi Zhuang because his dead cousin was Guan Zhuang village’s leader and had close relationship with Han Zhen. So far, I had heard all good words about Han Zhen. I asked Xianyue if she could arrange a meeting for me with Han Zhen. She replied: “He is very busy; you might ask Master Yu Qingcheng (a famous local artist) to help you to meet him.” It seemed that even though she was the manager of Shiqu Park in Yushi
village, she was still incapable for arranging this kind of meeting. I just wondered what a man
Han Zhen was! Finally, I met Han Zhen via Master Yu Qingcheng’s arrangement.

Figure 3.7 Yushi village leader Han Zhen. Photo by author, 2011.

On Oct 4, 2011, Han Zhen’s driver xiao Wang picked me up from Shiqu Yuan to Qiyuan, an ancient style guesthouse just down about 500 meter from Shiqu Park. In the reception hall, I saw a middle age gentle man waiting. Was this a village leader? He definitely did not look like a traditional countryside man I had seen in the books or movies, but more like a modern entrepreneur. Han Zhen gently shook my hand and invited me to sit at a square table in the hall. A pot of tea was on the table, and Han Zhen poured us each a cup. We started our formal interview, which lasted for an hour was repeatedly interrupted by his ringing cell phone. This told me that no matter where he was and what he was doing, he still needed to send out his commands.

I asked Han Zhen how he got ideas for these huge cultural projects such as the Stone Carving of the Portraits of 87 Immortal Beings, the Qingcheng Clay Sculpture Art Gallery, and the Wanfo Temple, and if he could describe for me the developmental steps of Yushi village. Han Zhen answered my questions very smoothly. Maybe he has already experienced numerous
interviews. He recounted a glorious local history from the Tang temples, the Qing Emperor Qianlong’s visit, and the battlefield in the Chinese-Japanese war. Then he said that the Pan Mountain region was charming but poor in the past. During the wars, many things were destroyed. For a long time, except for agriculture, local economy depended on mining and selling stones. However, this kind of economic activity damaged the local environment, so they gradually became aware of that they should stop to mining Pan Mountain and alter their traditional life way. Many insightful cultural celebrities, such as musician Qiao Yu, had a good relationship with Yushi village because of historic reasons, so they consulted with these people to get advice about how to change the village life conditions. Qiao Yu suggested they develop tourism and local cultural landscapes. The village had an old name, Messy Stone village (Luanshi Zhuang), and the emperor Qianlong endowed him with a fortune name, “Yushi Zhuang.” Yu (Jade) means wealthy. Thus, thinking of stone, they made their cultural projects the Stone Carving and the stone amusing park Shiqu Yuan.

When I asked Han Zhen how to describe the developmental course of the village in the past thirty years, Han Zhen firmly said that, generally speaking, the village’s achievements have relied on collective power. While most villages in the nation have been managed in the model of individual households since the early 1980s, Yushi village still insisted on a collective model according to their village’s particular natural, cultural, and economic conditions. In the last thirty years, the village has experienced three developmental phases. In the first phase, they stopped mining, stopped destroying the natural environment. They developed farmer’s guesthouses and cultural tourism spots. They aimed to provide tourists with food, lodging, transportation, and picturesque views. After constructing the framework for cultural tourism, the village entered a second developmental phase. From contact with outside urban tourists, the villagers’ views
changed. They knew what their own culture treasures were, and they used them to earn money. The village paid attention to educate people’s civil rituals and morals, honesty and filial piety. Then the village entered a new phase, that is, they recognized the good resources they own and knew how to use them to make better lives.

“How did you think of importing Yu Qingcheng’s clay sculpture to your village?” I asked him. He told me that in his early years, Yu Qingchen did his clay sculpture in the neighbor village Lianhe cun, so he knew Yu Qingcheng. At the beginning, when the village launched its construction projects for tourism, they wanted to use his reputation and his works to appeal to visitors and earn economic benefits. But after his art works were housed in Yushi village, the villagers gradually came to appreciate his art and became interested in making clay sculptures of their own. Now clay sculpture was becoming an important cultural mark of Yushi village, and villagers also made clay sculptures to sell as souvenirs. In the new village settlement construction, they planned to build a clay sculpture activity center and use twenty-four traditional filial piety stories as inspiration for clay sculptures, so everyone would see and know the filial piety tradition every day. The tradition of filial piety would continue in the village from generation to generation. For the Wanfo Temple project, the village had similar intention. The restored temple is not only a religious cultural object, but also a moral education site, so it is free for visiting. Han Zhen confidently declared to me, “We earned money, we became rich, but we also needed to improve our prevailing customs and morals. We oriented our village as Yushi landscape, farm home, magic clay sculpture, civil village (玉石胜境，耕读人家，神来泥塑，人文村庄).”

From our conversation, I could see this village leader’s ambitious goals for cultural tourism were not only for economic profit, but also for continuing good cultural spirit and
tradition. While Yushi villagers got rid of poverty and their traditional life patterns, they knew what they should keep from their traditional culture and what they aspire to in the future. From my talks with ordinary people in the village, I have seen that this new ideal exists not only in local cadres’ head, but also in the ordinary villagers’ minds. Villagers have waved off the old life style that was described in the old gazetteers. Nowadays they think more with a modern vision on inheriting or creating the village’s cultural traditions.

**The Other Voice I Heard from Yushi Village**

The new legends from Yushi Zhuang doubtless constitute a mini-picture of China in recent decades as it developed tourism to accelerate the local modernization process and to get rid of poverty. Tourism has brought in outsiders, investments, modern facilities, and tourists to the village. Tourism has woken up simple peasants’ wisdom, revitalized traditions, and spurred the creation of new culture and new dreams for the future. Tourism changed local facets of the traditional life style. The old Yushi village disappeared. The Yushi villagers were expecting to move into their modern dwellings in the near future. According to Xianyue and Han Zhen’s accounts, the new 450 m² dwellings for each household were designed as three-floor buildings. The first floor was used for villagers to run as guesthouses. The second and the third floor were used for villagers’ own living quarters. Gas heat and water pipes would be installed for each household. Two buildings specially designed in the residence area would be used for village administration, shopping store, day care, entertainment, and the clay sculpture activity center. All these descriptions revealed a picture different from local traditional dwellings: each individual household had a detached flat house built of stones with a closed courtyard; the earth- or brick-made *kang* bed; a big fire stove in the kitchen room. When Yushi people talked about this splendid new countryside construction project, they sounded proud, confident, and hopeful.
On the other hand, I also heard some negative opinions about local tourism and the new countryside construction project. These other voices are part of the full scenery of the new countryside construction and local tourism development, and they reflect a new tendency among villagers in participating public affairs and speaking out their opinions. From hearing these opinions, I could comprehensively understand how modern tourism changes local villagers’ lives in both positive and negative consequences.

On one occasion, I was taking transportation from Shiqu Park area back to town. On the way, the driver told me that he was from Yushi Zhuang. When I asked him how he felt about the changes in Yushi Zhuang. He forthrightly complained that the local water quality was becoming poorer because the new constructions caused changes in local water sources. He told me that in the past, the drinking water in the Pan Mountain area came from mountain springs, good natural mineral springs. However, now local villagers use the water delivered from water pipes. The water not only tasted poor but was also at risk from pollution. His words corroborated information I found in the new local gazetteer *Jizhou feng wu zhi*, which revealed that, in 2003-2004, the Pan Mountain Administrative invested four million RMB to recover the *Xia pan shui sheng* (lower Pan Mountain’s scenic water spot). The underground water was stored in eight water ponds and delivered to upper Pan Mountain 10 km away. This construction provides the drinking water and watering plants, and also recovered old Pan Mountain scenic spots *Fei bou jian, Su xia* and *Shi jing liu quan* (Jin 2006: 30). The comments from this man and from the book *Jizhou feng wu zhi* definitely show different attitudes toward the new construction and reflect both positive and negative reactions to this project among locals. For the new construction of the village settlement, the man said he worried about some negative reactions to the farmer’s guesthouse business. He said that because of the centralized reconstruction of the village
settlement, the guesthouse business had almost ceased. At present only three households remained in the old houses to continue their business. His family was the one of them. The driver also pointed out that the new countryside building was missing from the farmer’s life style. It was identical with the urban apartment building. Nong jia le (Farmer home happy tour) lost its meaning. He argued that urban people travelled far to live in a farmer’s home because the farmhouse was different from the urban building. But now the new village settlement was constructed like the one in the city. How could these urban style buildings be enjoyed by urban visitors? Although the first floor of the residence was designation for use as a guesthouse, it was just room, not the rural house tradition.

On another occasion, I was walking along a cement mountain road from the Pan Mountain Park to Shiqu Park. To the south of the road was the construction site of the new Yushi village. Because the mountain road was on higher terrain and the construction site was relatively lower, I took out my camera to take pictures of the full scenery of the construction site. At this moment, a man appeared. He noticed my interest in the village’s construction, so he voluntarily chatted with me. He is a Yushi villager. When I praised the new countryside construction, he pointed at some building complexes in the distance and said to me that those houses were built by Jixian County and Guan Zhuang Township. Several nearby villagers moved in, from places including Shifo village, Wang Zhuangzi, and Lianhe village. These houses are not free, although the price is lower than the real estate’s market. “It was poor in quality,” he said. The villagers just moved in not long, there were leaking water problems when it rained. In the winter, heat also was a problem. People were happy when they moved in, then soon they found the cost of heat was expensive. The average charge for the whole winter would cost over several thousand RMB. Ordinary people did not earn much, but they had to spend a lot.”
However, he also indicated that Yushi Zhuang was relatively better than the others were. The village distributed new dwellings to every household. If a villager did not want to get the new house, the village committee would compensate the household money up to 250,000 RMB. He said, “If we gave up our house and land, we could get more compensation. However, if we farmers lost the house base, how could we live? Thus, the future was uncertain.” His words reflect one of many contemporary rural concerns about the urbanization process. Not only farmhouse land, but also farmlands have been drastically reduced in recent decades. The lands were cheaply purchased from farmers either by local agencies or outside investors to use for other purposes under the rubric of local economic development, while farmers’ lives changed and lost security along with their land. Su provides a statistics in his study of rural China:

Seized lands were converted to nonagricultural use; since industry and development required a great deal of land, and since peasant farms were small, seizures took many peasants off their farms. Between 1990 and 2002, nonagricultural construction claimed 471.3 million mu of arable lands. Since the average farm size was 0.7 mu of land per person, each mu transferred to nonagricultural use resulted in 1.4 people becoming landless. It is estimated that in thirteen years, 66.3 million farmers were dispossessed of their primary means of making a living (Su 2009: 100).

Su also indicates, “China’s urbanization has been constructed upon the ambiguous status of urban and rural rights and mobility and under the black cloud of uncertain land rights and vague laws that were enforceable only for the convenience of political and economic elites” (Su 2009: 100). Since the rural land in China currently belongs to peasant collectives, the law permits the taking of land for the public good with just compensation to peasants. Under these conditions, peasants lack the power to decide their land use in terms of selling land, price negotiation, and so on. The situation has caused serious conflicts between local agencies and peasants on issues of land seizes, reuse, and compensation.
From my conversations with the ordinary Yushi villagers, I could detect some complex feelings—some pride, some confusion, and some worry. It seems that in this magical era of economic development, they were driven by something that they could not control by themselves. On the one hand, tourism economy transforms villagers’ lives from traditional to modern. Villagers are longing for modern life, and they are proud of their capacity to start on the modern track and enjoy its benefits. On the other hand, they feel they are losing something, and they are struggling for something. They might feel the modern buildings are not suitable to farmer’s daily lives, but they have to move into this kind of multi-floor buildings. They might still want to use wood or coal to heat, according to their economic condition, but they have to switch to the relatively expensive modern heat system. They may still want to have their own land, but almost all lands were used for developing tourism and real estate. Even if they still want to farm, they do not have land to do it. All these phenomena manifest in how the villagers accommodate their traditional life style to the modernization process, which challenges everyone from local government, agencies, to village leaders, and individual households.
Chapter 4
Preserving, Remaking, and Inventing Tradition: the Model of Processing Tradition

Developing tourism as a crucial strategy has stimulated Jixian’s cultural, economic, and social construction while raising new social issues. Individuals and local agencies have gotten involved in producing a distinctive local culture to promote local cultural tourism and signify local cultural identity. In this chapter, I will examine how local culture traditions and heritage have been processed and what forms can be observed from that processing. By sketching different kinds of local cultural projects and cultural practices in various contexts of Jixian, I attempt to outline a general model of processing tradition in terms of preserving traditional culture, reconstructing and remaking tradition, and inventing tradition in contemporary social practices.

Marilyn Ivy writes that, “Urban, nationally disseminated interest in recovering rural origins was matched by local communities’ reappraisals of their pasts. Some communities found in those pasts the cultural capital needed to boost both civic pride and outside investment” (Ivy 1995: 101). In Jixian, the phenomena I observed support this analysis. In a general view, under the national guideline, working toward the goal of constructing a modern tourism destination, Jixian’s local heritage and various traditional cultures have been treated with different techniques to meet various demands and situations. Drawing on Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett’s words, it is clear that the locals can see “the truths of heritage as they emerge from contemporary practice. Despite a discourse of conservation, preservation, restoration, reclamation, recovery, recreation, recuperation, revitalization, and regeneration, heritage produces something new in the present
that has recourse to the past” (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1995: 369-370). However, this is not a final analysis. In local cultural practices, cultural agencies and common people undertake endless endeavors. They engage as many ways as possible of using and making local cultural resources and treasures.

The efforts toward the presentation, utilization, reconstruction, and invention of tradition often elicit some concerns from cultural conservators regarding the issue of authenticity of tradition and various voices we have heard. Does tourism using heritage resources negatively affect to the authenticity of tradition and lead to the death of cultural forms, practices, and values (MacCannell 1992; Greenwood 1989), or does it promote the revitalization of tradition in a modern form (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1995, 1998; Swain 1989)? From which perspective shall we recognize and conceptualize the authenticity of tradition? Patricia Atkinson Wells questions who has the authority to authenticate. Does such power reside with in-group members or authoritative scholars? (Wells 2006: 9) Kimberley Dovey suggests that authenticity is rooted in indigenous processes and, as a condition of connectedness in the relationship between people and their world, is born from authentic dwelling practices in everyday life (Dovey 1985: 44-47). According to this perspective, in the case of traditions practiced by community members in developing local tourism, even original traditions are blended and transformed into reproductions, though they retain authenticity. To understand tradition processes in broad themes and multiple patterns, in the following I will respectively recount several special cases I encountered in Jixian, from which I hope to discover the ways of presenting, remaking, and inventing tradition in contemporary social contexts, and to gain insight into the concept of tradition through various local social practices.
Preserving the Original Form of the Dule Temple

The most famous piece of cultural heritage in Jixian County is the Dule Temple. Situated in the ancient-style Wuding Street, the significance of the Dule Temple lies in its long history, the practice of Buddhism, and its world famous three best features: ancient architecture, mud Guanyin statue, and mural painting. Dule Temple is one of the first sites on the National Key Cultural Relics Protection List entitled by the State Department in 1961 and listed as a candidate for worldwide cultural and historic heritage. Thus, Dule Temple is seen as a local cultural sign and also treated as the major heritage object in Jixian’s contemporary cultural tourism project.

Figure 4.1 Guanyin Pavilion in the Dule Temple. Photo by author, 2011

Two unique features of the Dule Temple are the Guanyin Pavilion (观音阁) and the Entry Arch (山门) from the Liao dynasty that were kept in their original form. The Guanyin Pavilion, twenty-three meters in height, is the oldest multi-story timber-structured pavilion in China. The eleven-headed Guanyin Bodhisattva statue in the pavilion, 16.08 meters in height, is one of the tallest colored clay sculptures in China. The precious Yuan dynasty mural painting runs around the four lower walls of the pavilion (3.15 meters high and 45.35 meters long). A signboard inscribed with Guanyin Zhi Ge hung on the front of the pavilion was written by the
famous poet of the Tang dynasty Li Bai (701-762). The Entry Arch, a ten meter high, solemnly built front gate, distinguished by its five ridges and four slopes and the two clay statue warriors carved in the Liao Dynasty, is the oldest one of its kind in China. On the arch, a horizontal board inscribed with the name of the temple, 独乐寺 (Dule means solitary joy), was written by Yan Song, the grand scholar and prime minister in the Ming dynasty.¹ In the history of Jixian, over one hundred ancient temples in the region have collapsed, declined, or been destroyed. Dule Temple has fortunately remained.

Different accounts give different dates for the original year of the temple. According to the restoration tablet issued in 2004 by the National Cultural Relics Bureau and Tianjin municipality government, Dule Temple was built in the Sui dynasty because the Sui emperor was infatuated with Buddhism. Another common view says that the temple was originally built in the Tang dynasty. Jizhou Zhi «蓟州志» in the Jiajing year of the Ming dynasty（明嘉靖）left the earliest text record: “Jizhou Dule Temple was on Wuding street, was built in the period of Tonghe years in the Liao. In front, there is the Dule Pavilion; its height is more than seventy feet (seven zhang). (蓟州独乐寺在武定街，辽统和间建，前有独乐阁，高七余丈。)” (Jixian wen wu bao guan suo 2007: 1). In the Qing book Ri xia jiu wen kao «日下旧闻考» volume 114, cited in Pan Mountain zhi, a clear date of rebuilding the temple is 984, the Tonghe second year of the Liao Dynasty (辽统和二年). “The duke Qin invited the Buddhism master Tanzhen, who entered Dule Temple and repaired the Guanyin pavilion. It was rebuilt in the winter of the Tonghe second year. It has one upper and lower two floors, five rooms from east to west, eight structures from south to north, and one grand pavilion. The eleven-faced Guanyin bodhisattva statue was also rebuilt (故尚父秦王请谈真大师入独乐寺，修观音阁，以统和二年冬十月再建，上下两极，东西五间，南北八架，大阁一所，重塑十一面观世音菩萨像。)” (Yu 1778: 1883). Ancient
architecture experts Liang Sicheng and Shi Shuqing both asserted that Dule Temple was initially constructed in the Tang Dynasty (梁思成“蓟县独乐寺观音阁山门考”；史树清“独乐寺李白署书观音之阁考”). Liang explains that the Tang dynasty was a prosperous time period for Buddhism. There were numerous temples and Buddha statues built and protected during the early years of that dynasty. In these circumstances, wood architecture could last several hundred years. Because of the turmoil in the later years of the Tang dynasty, the temple gradually declined, so it was reasonable to restore the temple in the Tonghe year of the Liao. According to this reckoning, it is very possible that the temple had been existed three hundred years before it was restored in the Liao (Liang 1932).

If we count the age of rebuilding the Dule Temple from the year of 984, the Liao dynasty, it is 1030 years old now. Throughout that millennium, Dule Temple has experienced numerous natural and social disasters and war damage. According to Han Jiagu’s Jixian Dule Temple Chronicles, (韩嘉谷 «蓟县独乐寺大事记»), the Dule Temple has experienced as many as thirty-seven earthquakes, two of which were especially strong. In 1679, the Kangxi eighteen years of the Qing dynasty, there was an eight earthquake of 8.0 magnitude in eastern Beijing close to Jixian. Wang Shizhen Ju Yi Lu «居易录» records that “in the Si mo earthquake, office buildings, stables, and people’s houses all collapsed. Only Guanyin Pavilion did not collapse (巳未地震，官厩民舍无一存，独阁不圮).” On July 28, 1976, another 8.0 earthquake in Tangshan area affected many areas of Tianjin, Beijing, and Hebei province and caused critical damage. Jixian’s many buildings suffered damages, but Guanyin Pavilion and the Entry Arch—an entrance building symbolizing a separation of the mortal world from the Buddha world—were safe. People who worked in the temple recalled that when the earthquake happened, someone saw the top of the Guanyin Pavilion shaking forth and back as far as much as one to two meters. However,
although the wall of the yard had fallen down, Guanyin Pavilion and the Entry Arch still stood
\cite{Jixian wen wu bao guan suo 2007: 3-4}.

Besides these natural disasters, the Dule Temple has also suffered many invasions and seizures. In the late Ming dynasty, the Qing military attacked Jixian three times and massacred the town. Local people stayed in and protected the temple. So the town was razed, but the temple was not destroyed \cite{明清之交, 蓟城被清兵三次屠城, 很多人集中于独乐寺, 誓死护庙, 故城虽屠, 而寺无恙} \cite{Liang 1932; Jixian wen wu bao guan suo 2007, 5}. In the beginning of the 20th century, the Eight United Army invaded Beijing. The German army invaded Jixian town and destroyed or seized many objects in the Dule temple. During the domestic warlord fights and the Sino-Japanese war, the Japanese military invaded the temple and damaged many objects. Fortunately, the original structure of Guanyin Pavilion and the Entry Arch from the Liao have withstood these disasters \cite{Jixian wen wu bao guan suo 2007, 4}. In the Cultural Revolution, from 1966-1976, while numerous ancient relics were destroyed under a political storm that overturned all old feudal customs and superstition, the Dule Temple fortunately escaped this political disaster. As “The Chronicle of Dule Temple Events” records, “In 1966, when the Red Guard attempted to destroy the Dule Temple’s relics, the Temple’s workers read to them the National Council’s order ‘The State Minster about the Regulations on Protection of Cultural Relics’ and stopped the Red Guard’s destructive action toward the Dule Temple” \cite{Jixian wen wu bao guan suo 2007: 93}. According to records of the maintenance history of the Dule Temple, from the late Ming and the Qing Dynasties, maintenance for the temple was mainly limited to painting and decoration of the surface \cite{Jixian wen wu bao guan suo 2007: 45}. The framework of the structure has not been changed (“骨干构架仍未更改.” \cite{Liang 1932}). Thus, the Dule Temple can be described as an original ancient structure form from thousand years ago.
In the modern era of local development, how has the original structure of the Dule Temple been treated? In my observation, the preservation and utilization of the Dule Temple follow the ideal of maintaining the original form and content to serve contemporary social needs. To support Jixian’s tourism strategic plan, the Dule Temple was doubtless a prominent tourism site for Jixian locals. The famous ancient architecture expert Liang Sichen comments on the Dule Temple that, “This Liao’s pavilion-style ancient architecture is unique in the world. It is really a valuable national treasure” (Jin 2007). Dule Temple serves as a local cultural sign not only for its architectural value, but also for its rich meaning in local history and cultural traditions. Thus, using Dule Temple to display Jixian’s history and culture and to enhance Jixian’s tourist reputation both domestically and worldwide has been an important step in preserving and utilizing this ancient temple. On May 10, 1980, Dule Temple was formally opened to domestic and international tourists as part of the initial stage of China’s reformation and opening.

Among the methods of preserving the precious historic value of this ancient object while using it to promote local modernization plans to construct a heritage tourism town, the main strategic endeavor applied to Dule Temple is to maintain the Guanyin Pavilion and Entry Arch in their original form, so tourists can experience the past by seeing the face of this thousand year old temple. The technical maintenance of Guanyin Pavilion and Entry Arch follows the principle of “using old material to repair old objects” (以旧补旧). The Jixian Relic Conservation Institution’s article “The Dule Temple Restoration Record (独乐寺维修纪实)” reveals how this principle works in the process. In 1984, at the Dule Temple One Thousand-Years Memorial Conference, some experts proposed that since Dule Temple had been built, the maintenance mainly was conducted as small repairs and recoloring. Thus, the wood structure of the temple
still retains its early features. Through a thousand years of natural disasters, the Dule Temple’s wood frame has changed shape and some poles have gone crooked. To eliminate potential dangers in this old temple, they considered a large-scale restoration. Around how to conduct the restoration, some worried that the original features would be lost because of the maintenance. Thus, the National Relics Bureau of China organized ancient architecture and earthquake experts to the site to investigate and discuss the restoration plans. It took five years to gather data about the structure’s problems. Finally, a plan for the project was set with the principle of “Ju bu luo jia bo zhen, jia gu wei xiu 局部落架拨正，加固维修.” That is, do some correction and dismantle the whole structure to its middle to avoid removing any of the existing structure and avoid damage to the mural painting, so as to keep as much of the original architecture style from the Liao dynasty as possible.

In March 1990, the National Relics Bureau of China approved this project. The restoration work included: correcting the main wood component part; renovating house surface; partly renovating the walls; strengthening the junctions; re-installing the fixing device of the Guanyin statue; and repainting the wood components and wall paintings. The article “The Dule Temple Restoration Record” recounts how, as cultural relic preservation, the Dule Temple project preserves valuable thousand-year-old historic information from this ancient structure in the greatest degree. For example, the original component parts contain rich historic information. If replacing them with the new ones, the value of the cultural relic will be lost. Thus, the restoration project made efforts to keep as many original components and materials as possible. Worn out or damaged components that were not considered a risk for the safety of the structure would not be replaced. Instead, technical methods of patching, adhering, etc., were applied to repair them. For those that were severely damaged and no longer could be used, the original state
was preserved by “using the original material and the original technique” (Jixian wen wu bao guan suo 2007: 45-47).

The project also made efforts to preserve past maintenance information. For example, in the Qianlong period of the Qing dynasty, there were eight supporting poles added to the corner of each side of the Guanyin pavilion. The poles were no longer useful after this maintenance, but they were still preserved in the original position because they recorded repairing information from two hundred years ago (Jixian wen wu bao guan suo 2007: 45-47). Wei Kejing, in his article “A Big Surgery to a Thousand Years Old Man: How Dule Temple Recovered its Youthful Vigor,” recounts that in the restoration process, the workers treated every wood part as a relic. Wood that was no longer of any use was replaced with the same kind of materials and original techniques. For instance, workers went to Northeast forests to search for red-pine wood. The huge bracket of the Guanyin Pavilion was made of elm wood and needed to be replaced. The workers searched for more than one year around the whole of Jixian territory. Finally they selected thirty woods and soaked them in water for one year, and then allowed them to dry naturally before use. There is a thousand-year-old cypress tree (古柏树) from the Tang dynasty called the Dragon Cypress (龙柏) in front of the Guanyin Pavilion. It has been a good match with the Pavilion, so in order to save this old pine tree and to provide the tree a suitable environment for absorbing air and sun light, the workers took off the surface bricks around the root of the tree and fertilized it, so the tree gradually regains its vitality (Wei 2007: 83).

The restoration project of Dule Temple took eight years and eight million RMB. It was completed in October of 1998. In 2003, the Dule Temple restoration project received the second-place award for science and technology. This project is a very proud accomplishment for the local cultural relic department. In my visit to the Dule Temple and interviews with its staff, they
all mentioned it. It is the quaint face of the Guanyin Pavilion that makes an impression on visitors. To review the whole process of the Dule Temple preservation project for Guanyin Pavilion, the core principle of “using old material to repair old objects” (以旧补旧) can be viewed from a scientific angle as a way of maintaining the historic value and information of ancient relics. It can also be interpreted from the perspective of modern social function and demand: “To be modern thus entails a search for the authentic, as a place from which one gains a meaningful perspective on the casualty of progress: self-alienation” (Oakes 1998: 24). It is part of the process whereby modernity constructs and appropriates a distant non-modern world, and puts it on display in museum-like fashion, thus defining the boundaries of modernity (MacCannell 1989). The effort to preserve the original form of the Dule Temple was conducted with complex considerations of contemporary desires. However, even in this endeavor of preserving its original ancient form, the authentic restoration still produces something new. Wei Kejing wrote, “People found that today the thousand-year-old Dule Temple recovers its youthful vigor. The formerly crooked wooden poles are corrected. The rotten wooden frame has been repaired. The decayed oil paintings are fixed. These are the accomplishments of preserving the Dule Temple. This repairing is like a big successful surgery for a thousand-year-old man” (Wei 2007: 83). From this point of view, the process of preserving tradition at any level cannot avoid incorporating something new.

**Reconstructing the Ancient Town**

In using local ancient cultural resources to facilitate modern tourism, ancient objects preserved in their original state like Dule Temple actually are very scarce. Another practice is the one we often see elsewhere in contemporary China, which is the reconstruction of ancient
objects according to old written records or folk legends. This type of local heritage can be described as the model of reconstructing tradition. The biggest project undertaken in Jixian is the reconstruction of the ancient town of Jixian.

There are written records from the past about the ancient town of Jixian. *Jizhou zhi* (*Jizhou Local Gazetteer*) volume 3, compiled by Shen Rui in the 11th year of the Daoguang period in the Qing dynasty (1831), records:

There is no clear date for the old town. In the past, it was only made of earth. From the Hongwu 4th year of the Ming dynasty (1371), it started to be built with bricks and stones. Jixian town’s circumference was around 9 li (4.5km) with the town walls 3.5 zhang high (11.7m) and 2400 battlements. The south of the town borders on the Gu water. The north of the town leans on the mountain. There are three town gates. The east gate was called Weiyuan. The west gate was called Gongji, and the south gate was called Pingjin. Each gate had a pavilion. At the four corners, there were four corner pavilions. There was no gate on the north. The town has a pavilion called the North Pole pavilion. There were 2 defending towers and 32 watch stations. In the Chongzhen Renwu year of the Ming dynasty, the town was destroyed. After the Qing dynasty was established, the town was not repaired and was damaged through rains. In the Kangxi eighteen years (1680), the town suffered a strong earthquake, so the west inner town collapsed. The falling bricks and stones often hurt people. In the Kangxi thirty-three years, Zhang Chaozong took the position of district head. He raised funds and spent thousands to repair the inner town, and also repaired the east and the south town gates. After the repair, they looked like new. In the Kangxi thirty-nine years of the Qing dynasty, the Qing emperor worshiped at the ancestor’s tombs and on his return, local people Zhong Liangfu and Li Wenjin asked the emperor to authorize the repair of the old town. Repairs began in March of the Kangxi forty-one years and finished in September. The three town gates as well the four corner pavilions were built. In the north, one North Pole pavilion was built. There were 2700 wall units for the entire town. In the Kangxi forty-two years, Zhang Chaozong made three horizontal boards inscribed with words and hung on the three gates. The words on eastside of the east gate is yong gu (stable forever). On the Westside of the east gate is dong lai zi qi (an auspicious omen). On the west gate, the Westside is yong ning (peace forever), and on the eastside is xi gong sheng jing (the west border of the capital). On the south gate, the Southside is yong kang (good forever) and the Northside is da jin (reachable) (*Jizhou zhi* vol.3 p. 351). (城垣不知创于何代, 旧惟土城, 明洪武四年始甃以砖石。周围九里十三步连女墙高三丈五尺, 垛口二千四十个。南濒沽水, 北倚山原。城门三座, 东曰威远, 西曰拱极, 南曰平津。各有楼。四角有角楼四座。正北无门。城上有楼名北极楼。敌楼二座, 更铺三十二间。明崇祯壬午年拆毁。我朝定鼎以后未及修茸, 历年雨水淋刷渐至塌坏, 又遭康熙十八年异常地震, 以至西门瓮城中空倒塌, 砖石常坠下伤人。康熙三十年州牧张朝宗莅任之初即捐募先修瓮城, 共费千余金, 并修葺东南二门, 俱焕然一新。。。康熙三十九年十月初八日清仁皇帝谒陵回銮, 本州民钟良辅李文锦等叩请修城。康熙四十一年三月初六日兴工, 九月告竣, 三门各建城楼一座, 四角各角楼一座, 正北城上北极楼一座, 雉堞两千百七十, 城垣焕然重修矣。康熙四十二年五月内郡牧张朝宗制匾悬挂三门)
Now the board on the east side of the east gate has the words *zhen dan chang qing*. It was set in March of Yongzheng ren zi year (1732). The south pavilion was destroyed by fire. This was said toward the end of the Daoguang year (1821-1850). The North Pole pavilion also collapsed. In 1915, county governor Huang Guoxuan built Guanlan pavilion in the site. From the Guangxu year (1875-1908) forward, the town walls gradually collapsed. Neither was it completely destroyed nor was it maintained properly. In the Republic year 27 (1938), the Xingan army settled here and compelled people to work on the repair of the town walls. But since they were in rush to get bricks and stones, the repair workers just took the material from the walls on the outskirt of the town. In the following year, it was repaired again. The outer town wall was integrity, but the inner town wall was still poor as before. The southeast corner pavilion was also sold to compensate for the cost. The town walls were not complete. The town always used the Drum Tower as the dividing point of the town. The town was laid so that from Drum Tower to the east gate was Wenhu Street; from Drum Tower to the west gate was Wuding Street, which was named for the Guandi temple; from Drum Tower to the south gate was Taiping Street; and from Drum Tower to the plantation in the north town was the Gongxing Street. There are horse roads built from the three gates (*Minguo Jixian zhi* vol. 6. P.155).（“今东门城楼东面匾额为震旦长青。雍正壬子年春三月立，可为当时修补之证。南门城楼毁于火。闻在道光末年。北极楼久废无存。民国三年县长黄国瑄建观澜阁于其地。溯自光绪以来，城垣日渐坍塌，未言废，亦难言守。民国二十七年兴安部队于八月间来驻，令商民修葺城桓。彼时以事出急迫，无从募集砖石，或起用城上海漫，或拆用城外墙垛，剜肉补肉书。东门东面曰永固，西面曰东来紫气，西门西面曰永宁，东面曰西拱神京，南门南面曰永康，北面曰达津。（«蓟州志»卷之三城池 p.351）

Figure 4.2 Ancient town map. Source: 1831 edition of *Jizhou zhi* (*Jizhou Gazetteer*). *Minguo Jixian zhi* «民国蓟县志» (*Minguo Jixian Gazetteer*), compiled by Qiu Xiting in 1944, besides using the old sources, provides additional information about the situation of the old town during the Minguo period (1912-1949):
Drum Tower has been a significant landmark in Jixian town. In the recent local gazetteer *Jizhou feng wu zhi*, changes to Drum Tower were traced as follows; In the fourth year of Hongwu in the Ming dynasty (1371), two towers—the clock tower and the drum tower—were built at the center town. In the Tianshun year of the Ming dynasty (1439), the local governor combined the two towers as one drum tower. At the end of the Chongzhen year of the Ming dynasty (1644), the tower was destroyed by the Qing army. In the Kangxi year of the Qing dynasty (1662-1722), the Jixian town and the drum tower were rebuilt. In the Qianlong year eleven of the Qing dynasty (1746), the drum tower was ruined by fire and was rebuilt again in the year of Daoguang 15 of the Qing dynasty (1836). From that time forward, due to military invasions and social political changes, the old drum tower gradually fell into ruin (Jin 2006: 145-148).

In the late 20th century, as traditional culture was redefined politically from the end of the Cultural Revolution, the restoration of the ancient town and objects has been gradually undertaken locally alongside the political changes and modernization process in China. As with the restoration of Dule temple sponsored by national and local relic institutions, in 1985, the Jixian government had spent money to repair and to repaint the damaged Drum Tower. Drum Tower regained its old charm from this repair: A tall platform in dark grey color holds ten sturdy red poles. A nine-spine hill roof of dark grey tile was made and supported by arches and winding corridors. On the southern side, a horizontal board inscribed with the big words “古渔阳” (Ancient Yuyang), which was copied from the Qing dynasty’s local governor Hua Jun’s handwriting.
Entering the twenty-first century, Jixian set up the goal to build a mid-level tourism city and launched large-scale renovation projects. In 2003 and 2004, during the renovation of the roads and the town buildings as a part of the Jixian local modernization plan, archeologists did several investigations beneath the old central town area. They discovered that there was an ancient stone road, 8.5 meters wide, from south to north leading toward Drum Tower. The eastside of the road retained the foundations of Ming and Qing buildings from south to north, a total of twenty-seven units. The Westside of the road also had foundations of twenty buildings of the Ming and Qing period. On the site, the archeologic discoveries include ancient coins, steel scales, porcelain wine containers, and bricks, all of which reveals that the area of the Drum Tower was an active commercial center in the Ming and Qing period (Jin 2006: 161).

To carry out its ambitious plan to transform Jixian from a traditional agriculture society to a modern tourist destination, the Jixian local government planned to reconstruct the old face of the ancient town. The perspective was that the appearance of the ancient town would be visibly connect the long history of Jixian to the present, and thus create a traditional cultural atmosphere harmonizing with its ancient relics, which would draw more international and domestic tourists. The large project of reconstruction of the ancient town was formal launched in the early 2000s and began with a group of structures in the style of ancient Ming and Qing dynasties, along with the Drum Tower Square close to the local remarkable cultural relics of Dule Temple. The reconstruction project was complete in 2004 (Jin 2006: 148).

The plan to reconstruct the ancient town derived its layout from the Ming and Qing dynasties. It still used Drum Tower as a central sign and extended the town area with the four main streets: the east Wenchang Street and the west Wuding Street carry their names and good connotations from old times. Wenchang means prosperity of the literate. Wuding means strength
of military power in maintaining the stability of society. The south street and the north street were renamed using the ancient local name Yuyang rather than the old street names (Taiping Street and Gongxing Street) to evoke a local cultural legacy. At the entrances to east Wenchang Street, west Wuding Street, and south Yuyang street, traditional style colorful town gates were built with a horizontal board on the top inscribed with old words from the version of the Kangxi year of the Qing dynasty. Like during the Ming and the Qing dynasties, there was not a town gate built at the entrance to the north street. A new grand Drum Tower Square was built to the south of the Drum Tower. The ground of the square is paved cement on the surface and has white marble dragon poles and two ancient style pavilions. The square has been used as a major opening place for both locals and tourists.

Figure 4.3 Jixian’s reconstructed ancient town. Photo by author, 2011.

Along the Drum Tower Square and the four streets, ancient-style two- or three-story buildings were built up side by side. They have dark red walls, wooden checked windows, and black tile hill spine roofs. The corners of their eaves were decorated with images of the Chilin (Unicorn), which is a fabulous creature of good omen and symbolizes longevity, grandeur, felicity, illustrious offspring, and wise administration. The eaves are made of wooden material
and painted with traditional Chinese motifs such as flowers and plants that are commonly seen on the ancient architecture in other places in China.

The reconstruction of ancient towns or streets has been a prevalent phenomenon in China since the 1990s, accompanied by the revitalization of cultural tradition and the development of local cultural tourism. Feng Jicai has sharply criticized this phenomenon by arguing that ancient town reconstructions actually destroy local culture history. He characterizes this movement as a hasty and rough action. It is another kind of disaster, like the Cultural Revolution, that is destroying the Chinese cultural history (Feng 2007: 204). He summarized three features of this kind of ancient relic reconstruction. First, vulgarized renovation such as renewal and repainting of the old architecture to make it look new that transforms something real into something fake; second, careless reconstruction of vanished ancient structures and randomly adding new spots without a historical basis; third, blatant commercialization. The reconstruction of these cities or towns is designed to divide them by function, such as commercial areas, residence areas, entertainment areas, and ancient architecture areas because this layout makes for easy tour routes. But this design is irrelevant to local culture. As a result, a natural authentic historic ecology is vanishing (Feng 2007: 223). He points out that reconstructing historic spots is not for recovering history but for earning money. In the old times of China, vernacular architecture normally did not leave a blueprint or picture. Thus, there is no reference left for today’s reconstruction. Reconstructions were almost always based on old people’s vague memories. Some may say there was a pavilion and some may say there was an entrance gate on the site. Some may say it was a pavilion and some may say it was a tower. Some may say it was a six-sided tower and some may say it was an eight-sided tower. The main project leader often chooses the project design according to his personal interest and gives it to a construction
company to do. Nobody attends to the age, style, and pattern of an ancient structure. Whatever has some traditional patterns on it is seen as an ancient structure. Nowadays many places are constructing Ming and Qing Style streets. This is a typical example of crude work done in imitation of ancient architecture (Feng 2007: 222).

The situation in China nowadays to some degree is indeed as Feng Jicai criticized. The modernization process in China has been a nationwide movement, from urban to rural, driven by political goals and economic speed. Many strategies have been developed and applied. The long history and rich cultural relics provides plentiful recourses and potential for locals to work on reconstructing ancient scenery to promote cultural tourism. In the meantime, new cities and towns with a large number of modern buildings and roads were also built. Reconstruction and new construction have worked together to facilitate the modernization of China. Outcomes vary. Inferior and counterfeited constructions exist. However, from another viewpoint, Feng Jicai’s criticism itself falls into falsehood. When he uses the terms “historic scenery 历史景点,” “historic cultural authentic ecology 历史人文的原生态,” and “imitation of ancient architecture 仿古建筑,” he seems to be viewing them in a static frame. He simplyneglects the fact that history is a mobile process. Any ancient structures have also experienced numerous repairs and reconstructions for various reasons during their existence. For instance, the reconstruction and repair of Jixian town and the town gate during the Ming and Qing dynasties had been conducted many times, and the records show that the inscription boards hung on the town gates had also been changed from the Hongwu year of the Ming dynasty to the Kangxi year of the Qing dynasty. To correspond to historic reality (历史真实), which version should be used as an authentic copy of an ancient town or structure? The problem in Feng Jicai’s argument is that he does not consider changes and creativity in renovation processes that actually have been the
dynamic of revitalizing cultural tradition and cultural heritage—in Jackson’s terms, “Cultural Flexibility” (Jackson 2004).

In the Jixian case, although the local reconstruction projects have occurred in the national wave of reconstruction of ancient relics, the ancient town reconstruction plan indeed has its historic basis according to Jixian’s gazetteers and archeological findings. In the Jixian gazetteers, the information about the ancient town is limited to the location and general layout of ancient objects, but they lack detailed and accurate information to guide contemporary reconstruction of the old town. For example, what was the exact look of the street buildings in the ancient times? How many were there? There is no accurate data or images to provide this kind of information. Thus, it is impossible for the builders to copy the old town exactly. In addition, the redesigning needs to consider contemporary social functions, life standards, and accessibilities. For instance, to construct an ancient appearance, should the ground be made of dirt and mud? With these factors to take into account, the reconstruction process cannot avoid adding something new under the contemporary design. In the reconstruction, a large supermarket called Gu lou guang chang di xia shang cheng (古楼广场地下商城) was built under Drum Tower Square to provide convenient shopping for both local residents and outside visitors. This is a design driven by the modern ideal. Is it a distortion of ancient authenticity?

In Michael Foster’s study of an island ritual Toshidon in Japan, he mentions that “certainly the long history of Toshidon, its presumed continuity with the past, is important and often cited (older residents, for example, readily criticize today’s Toshidon for not being as ‘scary’ as in their day), but most islanders seem to resist any teleological understanding of the practice. They insist that Toshidon is a pragmatic, ad hoc undertaking not confined by past standards or locked into unbreakable patterns” (Foster 2011: 92). This evidence provides support
for interpreting Jixian’s case. The reconstruction of the Jixian ancient town actually did not reproduce a town identical to those of the Ming and Qing dynasty. It is not a town face from the 1700s, but it is the face of a town continuing through historic progress to the twenty-first century, a new version of Jixian. Some old elements remain among new modern elements. Thus, tradition is presented in a familiar and unfamiliar appearance. In my view, if this reconstruction could be contextualized to show its vitality and its reception in local social, economic, and cultural contexts, like the other historic versions of the old town recorded in the local gazetteers, this design and reconstruction could also be recorded in Jixian’s local history as a version of the town that was made in 2004, because this reconstruction did not intend to produce an ancient town museum, but rather a live setting for local cultural revitalization and the engagement of local social and economic life.

**Remaking Tradition: The Dule Temple Fair**

Ancient architecture as tangible cultural heritage can be relevantly preserved or restored according to historic data and description. However, the live tradition cannot be static. In the effort to preserve local tradition and promote local cultural tourism, some traditional cultural activities, old customs, and festivals have also been recovered. These programs are subject to people who live in the contemporary social setting. Thus, although recovered cultural programs originate in the past, they are remade and updated by program organizers, performers, and participants in accordance with their contemporary social needs, interests, and aesthetics. I view this type of processing as remaking tradition. To illustrate this process, the most significant example in Jixian is the annual Dule Temple Fair.
The Temple fair is a common traditional religious, economic, social, and cultural event in Chinese life. Archeologic discoveries reveal temples used for the worship of ancestors in China that can be traced back five thousand years. During the Han dynasty, Taoism was spread, and Buddhism was imported from India. Various religious temples were built everywhere. From the Sui and the Tang dynasty forward, Buddhism was gradually localized and permeated Chinese daily life and common belief (Cao 1991). The *Diction Encyclopedia* explains that Temple Fairs “already existed in the Tang dynasty. They were held nearby or in the temples during special temple festivals or assigned dates.” People gathered in temples for sacrificing and entertaining deities. In the rural environment, such a gathering provides a good occasion for the scattered rural people to trade goods and entertain themselves. Especially in the pre-modern period, agricultural products were gradually commercialized, but appropriate market and circulation channels had not been established. Peasants had to rely on local fairs to sell or exchange their products. Thus, the temple fair served multiple functions in religion, trade, social connections, and entertainment in Chinese history. In his article “The Nature of Temple Fairs,” Duan Baolin defines the temple fair from a folkloristic angle and explains that, “The temple fair is a kind of comprehensive folklore. It is related to religious belief, commercial folklore, cultural entertainment and so on” (Duan 1994). Xiao Tian delineates the temple fair as an assembly around the temple and held on particular dates in which people worship deities, trade, and provide entertainment (Xiao 2000: 104). The temple fair notably stays common in Chinese life throughout history and performs its special functions in an agriculture-based social environment.

In Jixian, the Dule Temple Fair is the most influential local temple fair and radiates to the surround areas. According to the book *Dule Si*, the Dule Temple Fair has had several hundred years of history. It occurred from the Liao and flourished in the Ming and the Qing. This is
because Jixian town was a hub of trade, economic, and cultural activities in the region. The prevalence of Buddhism and worship of Guanyin in China and thousand–year-old Guanyin Pavilion located in the Dule Temple have also made the temple fair very famous. An inscription on a stone tablet records that numerous people joined the temple fair, and the site was crowded (Jixian wen wu bao guan suo 2007: 48). Ancient Chinese architecture expert Liang Sicheng described the old temple fair:

For a thousand years, the Dule Temple has been at the center of Jixian people’s religious life. The temple is located inside the west gate of the Jixian town. There is a tall pavilion, taller than everything else in town. Thus, it can be seen from more than ten li (1 li = 0.5km) away. In March of the old calendar, the temple held the temple fair. The residents in Jixian walked a long distance to participate in the fair. They expected to “bring good fortune to home.” In Jixian people’s mind, the temple is really a sacred place. Such a temple fair has been happening for several hundred years. Jixian’s elders also do not know in which year it began. (“千数百年来，为蓟民宗教生活之中心者，则独乐寺也。寺在城西门内，有高阁，高出城表，自城外十余里之遥，已可望见。每届废历三月中，寺例有庙会之举，县境居民，互数十里跋涉，参加盛会，以期‘带福还家’。其在蓟民心目中，实为无上圣地，如是者已数百年，蓟县耆老，亦莫知其始自何年也”) (Liang 1932).

In the Qing dynasty, since the east court of the Dule temple was built and used as the imperial palace, Dule Temple became a forbidden site until feudal imperialism was overthrown in the early 20th century. During this period, people gathered in front of the temple on the particular dates of the temple fair. This tradition was never interrupted. According to the chapter “The Grand Occasion of Temple Fair” in the book Dule Si, in the past, there were not only religious activities, but also a market and art shows. During the temple fair, folk artists showed off their talents. Street peddlers from local, neighbor counties, even other cities such as Tianjin, Beijing, Tangshan, Baoding, and so on gathered here. Men and women, old and young, strolled through the fair. Jixian also had a local custom. When a temple fair is held, families all brought their married daughters and daughters-in-law back home, invited relatives and made a big dinner to
eat together. It was called guo miao (celebrate the temple). During the Cultural Revolution, the
temple fair was abolished (Jixian wen wu bao guan suo 2007:48-49).

In the wave of recovering cultural tradition and developing cultural tourism, the Dule
Temple Fair was revived too. In the 2003 Chinese Spring Festival, organized by the Jixian
Cultural Bureau and the Jixian Tourism Bureau, the first session of the Dule temple fair was re-
created. From 2003 forward, The Dule Temple Fair has been held annually as an important part
of local Spring Festival celebration activities. In 2004, the Dule Temple Fair was listed on
Tianjin city’s Spring Festival Program. The fair session was from the end of lunar December to
the seventh day or the fifteenth day of the first month of the Chinese lunar New Year. The fair
attracted local residents, outside visitors from surround areas, as well as tourists from the big
cities of Beijing and Tianjin.

In my fieldwork in Jixian in 2011, I participated in the eighth session of the Dule Temple
Fair and witnessed how this tradition had been revived in the contemporary atmosphere. From
my observation, this traditional event is from the past, but it is not the same as the original one. It
has been contemporized to service local social, economic, and entertainment desires, and fulfills
the local modern tourism development plan. In the following, I will use the phenomena I
observed during the Dule Temple Fair to illustrate and interpret the process of remaking tradition
in local cultural practice.

The traditional temple fair is a spontaneous practical custom centering on gathering in the
temple area to engage in religious, commercial, and amusing activities. The March fair date in
the past discloses that the Dule Temple Fair is a different tradition from the Chinese lunar New
Year celebration. According to the important celebration dates of Buddhism, lunar February 19
is the birthday of Guanyin and April 4 is the birthday of Buddha, so the Dule Temple Fair held in
March according to old records was possibly related to the Buddhism celebration. Besides, in lunar March, which is the solar calendar month April, the weather is getting warm and spring cultivation used to begin. According to the lunar Chinese calendar 24 seasons, March has the seasons 惊蛰 (jing zhe; Waking of Insects), and 春分 (chun feng; Vernal Equinox), right before the season when seed, grass, and trees thrive. Thus, the fair in lunar March reflects its original religious meaning, praying for deities to protect a good farming year. Meanwhile, it was a good occasion for peasants to trade and to obtain the goods they need for farming and living. The revived Dule Temple Fair has changed the Temple Fair date to the Chinese New Year celebration that mostly happens in the solar calendar months January or early February. The organizer’s intention is clear. First, it is set in the frame of Chinese New Year Holiday, the longest holiday vacation assigned by Chinese government, so a large number tourists and local people can participate in the Dule Temple Fair activities. Second, the temple fair program can enrich the spring festival activities and promote local winter tourism if the fair date coincides with the Chinese New Year Holiday. Thus, the reset of the fair date is obviously a consideration for its contemporary social functions rather than being bound to the original meanings and functions.

The contemporary Dule Temple Fair is no longer a spontaneous activity. It has been carefully planned and organized by the local government and agencies to be a collaboration between multiple departments of culture, tourism, commerce, traffic, and police. I collected newsletters from several years of the Dule Temple Fair. Normally, the first several lines in the newsletter declare who the organizers and sponsors of the event are. For instance, the newsletter of the 2008 Dule Temple Fair declares that, “The Dule Temple Fair was organized by the Jixian Tourism Economy Committee and the Jixian Cultural Bureau. The purpose is to expand
traditional national culture and push forward winter season economic development (独乐寺庙会由蓟县旅游经济委员会、蓟县文化局联合举办，旨在弘扬传统民族文化，拉动冬季旅游经济的发展).” Several weeks before the temple fair was held, advertisements for the event appeared on the local newspaper, TV, and other media. For instance, the advertisement for the eighth Dule Temple Fair printed in the local weekly newspaper Xin Jizhou (Jan 10, 2011) occupied a full page. The following is the full content:

Title: 弘扬民族传统文化，展现蓟州民俗风情，曲院风荷第八届独乐寺庙会
(Promoting National Culture Tradition, Display Jizhou Folklore and Cultural Scenery, Qu yuan feng he 8th Session Dule Temple Fair)
Content [in Chinese, translated by author]:

In order to advocate our rich local cultural heritage, to make a joyful and peaceful holiday atmosphere, to enrich people’s holiday activities, to support our county’s winter season tourism and economic development, sponsored by the Tianjin City Tourism Bureau, the Jixian People’s government, and undertaken by the Jixian Cultural and Broadcast Bureau and the Jixian Tourism Bureau, with the theme of ”enlarging and continuing national cultural tradition and displaying Jizhou folklore and customs,” the eighth session Qu yuan feng he Dule Temple Fair will be held from January 31 (lunar Dec 28) to February 9 (lunar January 7). During the session, there will be featured programs including an opening ceremony, huahui (folk dance) shows, acrobatic shows, drama, quyi (comic talk etc.), and traditional folklore displays.

When visiting the eighth Dule Temple Fair, you can watch brilliant performances, experience fun games, taste local snacks, worship Guanyin, and burn incense sticks before Guanyin statue to bring your safety to your home. Throughout its history, Dule Temple’s worship was prosperous. The temple fair has had several hundred years’ history and reached its highest reputation in the Qing dynasty. The temple fair gathers folk arts, traditional customs, and religious culture in one place. Its rich content reflects the various folklore of the ancient Jizhou region. As a traditional folk cultural event, the Dule Temple fair has been successfully held for 7 sessions. Its size and influence have been gradually expanding. It has become Tianjin city’s brand for the winter season cultural tourism and a showcase of Jixian’s unique glamour. In 2009, Dule Temple Fair was listed as Tianjin intangible cultural heritage.

Time: lunar Dec. 28 –Jan. 7 (break on lunar Dec 29, 30)
Place: Wuding Street #41, Jixian, Tianjin”

This post informs us that the multiple departments of the local government and its upper level management were involved in the organization of the event. In addition, the commercial company Qu yuan feng he, a real estate investment corporation, also joined in and the company’s
name was added in the program and used during the temple fair session, mostly because of its financial contribution. In this way, the company’s business got advertised. The multiple purposes embraced by the Dule Temple Fair—celebration of tradition and holidays, tourism, and commercial profit were clearly stated in this post from the 2009 Dule Temple Fair:

The main reason for holding this event is that this activity gathers the best New Year cultural resources from various areas, with a grand size, rich content, and new form. During the season, it will supply to the whole county’s people a rich and delicious cultural feast. Meanwhile, through media avocation, it will bring to the golden week of the Spring Festival a huge commercial market and unlimited attraction, so it will cause a big sensation and produce huge commercial value. The estimated number of daily visitors will reach to one hundred fifty thousand. This temple fair features a larger size, longer duration, many activity spots, and numerous participants. It will be broadly spread out, so it has unlimited commercial advocating value, and it is a good opportunity for business enterprises to use as a cultural vehicle for an advertisement platform while benefitting from lower investment costs, broad influence, and more returns.

To fulfill these multiple purposes, the temple fair programs were carefully planned by its organizers and were formulized as a series of regular programs for each year, as listed below:

1) Opening ceremony, held at the platform of Guanyin Pavilion.

2) Guanyin ci fu (Guanyin giving fortune) held at the platform of Guanyin Pavilion.

3) Buddhist ritual performance, held at the main hall of the Dule Temple.

4) Folk dance and huahui performance

5) Drama, song, and gong fu performances

6) Folk arts performances, including making candy-man figures, making dough-man figures, paper cutting, finger painting, calligraphy, costume display, and tuo pian, held inside the court of the Dule Temple, east courtyard of the temple, or along the Wuding street.

7) Visitors’ participating activities: hitting the clock, throwing coins, guessing lantern riddles, etc.

8) Local special products and food display, such as big bowl of tea soup, sticky cake, etc.
The exact locations for the programs 4-7 have been decided from year to year. In the previous years, they were often held in the Dule Temple yard. In 2011, when I attended the fair, programs 1-3 were held at the location I listed above. Program 4 was held at the west side of the Entry Arch, and program 5 was held at the east side of the Entry Arch. Program 7, throwing coins, was held at the west site between the Guanyin pavilion and the Baoen Yuan. However, from recent information I gathered, except for programs 1-3, other programs have been moved out from the Dule Temple and held in the east yard. The purposes stated by the organizer are for reducing potential harm to the temple and opening events to public participation. This move shows that consciousness of both preservation and utilization of tradition has gradually increased among local organizations.

According to my observation of the whole program of the eighth session of the Dule Temple Fair, the major events operated as follows: There was a grand opening ceremony arranged by undertaking parties. The opening ceremony has been an occasion to invite upper level leaders visiting the fair and get Media broadcast the event. The opening ceremony was held in front of the Guanyin Pavilion on lunar December 28 from 10 am to 11 am. The ceremony included 1) speeches by the representative from each sponsor party and financial support party: the Tianjin Tourism Bureau, the Jixian government, Qu yuan feng he real estate investment company, the Jixian Tourism Bureau and the Jixian Cultural Bureau; 2) drum dance performance; 3) the ritual of Guanyin blessing and distributing fortune ribbons; 4) modern singing performance. On this occasion, the activities were led by the organizer. The leaders stayed on the stage.
In the new Dule Temple Fair session, one popular program is the performance of the ritual *Guanyin ci fu* (Guanyin distributes sacred water and fortune ribbons to people). This is a revived tradition from the old temple fair. Worship of Guanyin is a particular feature of Dule Temple’s religious activity, not only because Guanyin worship is prevalent in China, but also because the Dule Temple ancient cultural objects (the famous Guanyin pavilion and Guanyin statue) are particularly related to Guanyin.

In Buddhism, Guanyin Bodhisattva holds the highest position next to the Buddha. According to the Buddhist scripture, Guanyin originally was a man, the son of the king. Buddha renamed him Guanshiyin, which means he would detect all sufferings in the secular world and help to transfer lives from suffering to prosperity. In the Buddhist belief, only after Guanshiyin accomplishes his task can he upgrade to a Buddha. Guanshiyin kindly saves life from suffering and eliminates all kind of people’s troubles. However, the sufferings in the secular world have never been ended, so Guanshiyin has to fulfill his duty forever. Although Guanshiyin may never become a Buddha, the influence of Guanshiyin in the secular world actually surpasses the Buddha.
After Buddhism arrived in China, Guanshiyin belief was widely spread and also localized. To avoid using the same pronunciation shi that appears in the Tang emperor Li Shimin’s name, Guanshiyin’s name was simplified as Guanyin. In Chinese beliefs, especially in folk beliefs, Guanyin mostly appears as a woman. The Guanyin’s image is also female. The reasons can probably be attributed to the social function of Guanyin in China. First, Guanyin’s sympathy resembles female’s nature. Second, in folk beliefs, Guanyin can help childless households to have children. In the Chinese ideology in the past, the biggest suffering for a household was to have no descendant, so women worship Guanyin to help them conceive. It is obviously inconvenient if Guanyin is a male god because the traditional Chinese society follows a male and female separation rule (Zhao 1993: 393-407). As a result, the localized Guanyin is commonly viewed as a female deity knowing everything in the world and having universal powers to liberate people from sufferings. She has multiple heads, one thousand eyes, and one thousand hands to help people. In the Dule Temple Guanyin Pavilion, a clay statue of Guanyin stands 16.08 meters high, with one large head and ten smaller heads. The small heads are set on the top of the main head. It is said that this statue is the highest colorful Guanyin clay sculpture in China. The face of Guanyin shows dignity and benevolence. She wears a necklace, a long colorful skirt, and a cape, a typical dressing style in the Tang dynasty. Her body is a little bit inclined forward. Her right arm is lifted and the left arm is down with her hands in a receiving gesture. The image vividly delivers a message that she is looking at, listening to, and caring for people’s sufferings.
According to the Tang dynasty monk Xianjiang’s translation of the “Eleven Face God Swear Inscription,” the eleven face god can protect people’s health, richness, courage, and dignity, and prevent harm from devils, weapons, water, and fire, and malignant death (Jixian wen guan suo 2007: 18-19). These functions fit people’s desires, regardless of whether they lived in ancient times or modern. Thus, the tradition of worship of Guanyin and praying for fortune has continued in the Dule Temple. For local people, Guanyin pavilion and Guanyin Statue are not only physical ancient objects and relics, but also religious symbols and idols for them to employ when mentally seeking their desires and securities. However, although the nature of worship of Guanyin has a connection from ancient to present, the recovered ceremony Guanyin ci fu (Guanyin gives fortune) held during the Dule Temple Fair is obviously a cultural product remade by the organizers and is dissimilar from the past tradition, according to my observation on the site.
The ritual performance “Guanyin ci fu” is based on the recorded local old custom of worshipping Guanyin in order to “bring fortune to the home (带福还家).” The organizer of the Dule Temple Fair produced an elaborate visual performance of Guanyin ci fu. In the eighth session of the Dule Temple Fair, the ritual was performed two times each day, in the morning and in the afternoon. I watched several times when I was inside the Dule Temple. The ritual described below is the one I attended on Feb 3, 2011, the first day of the Chinese New Year.

When a woman announced, via audio amplifier, that a ritual performance of Guanyin ci fu would began, a crowd of people moved to the front of the ground of the Guanyin Pavilion and waited for the ritual show. Accompanied by ancient Chinese music and reciting comments about the ritual plots, a monk with two children who wore ancient costumes walked from behind the east side of the temple. The monk held a Buddha stick while one child held a lantern and the other held a pot of holy water. They marched into the Guanyin pavilion. Then Guanyin, who was played by a beautiful young woman wearing a long white gown and also was accompanied by two children, appeared on the platform of the Guanyin pavilion. She lifted her hands in front of her breast and saluted. Then, she took a willow twig in one hand and a bowl of holy water in the other and sprinkled the holy water on the crowd of excited people. Her kindly and peaceful face moved the audience. At this moment, everyone under the stage tried to get as close as they could to Guanyin in the hope of being splashed with holy water; in this ritual the holy water from Guanyin would symbolically wash away misfortunes from their life. In order to control overcrowded situation, a couple of staff and guards of the Dule Temple had to stand on the edge of the stage. People’s facial expressions on the site reveal that the spiritual Guanyin in people’s mind had been adhered to the actor of Guanyin. In their eyes, the Guanyin player is the incarnation of Guanyin.
After giving the holy water, Guanyin went back inside Guanyin Pavilion and distributed red fortune ribbons (fu dai 福带) to everyone. People lined up to receive ribbons. Some people took the ribbons and left. Some people signed their name on the ribbons and tied the ribbons on the wish tree. The whole ritual was like a stage play. The actors carefully played as directed, and the music and comments from the broadcast guided audience to follow the performance scenes, but the only true things remained and connected with the old tradition was the audience’s sacred feeling toward Guanyin and their wish to escape suffering and bring fortune home.
On another day after observing the performance of the ritual of *Guanyin ci fu*, I interviewed Wang Ruihong, who is the coordinator of the 8th session Dule Temple Fair activities, to learn more behind-the-scene stories about the ritual performance of “*Guanyin ci fu*.

Wang Ruihong is a middle-age man, tall and sturdy, who speaks with a heavy Jixian accent. In my attempts to secure interviews about Jixian cultural traditions and tourism with the local offices such as the Jixian Cultural Bureau and the Jixian Tourism Bureau, I was declined many times. I assumed the main reason that these officials worried about was that inappropriate talking with me might cause unexpected troubles for their position. In Chinese words, it is better to avoid one more thing than to involve in one more things. Understanding this kind of pragmatism, I did not expect to get much of use from them because I knew that even I was able to interview them, they might not tell me the truth. Wang Ruihong is one of the few who did not refuse my interview request and talked frankly with me. Thus, I conducted several interviews with him and he also helped me enter the Dule Temple daily to observe the Dule Temple Fair. Below is the transcript from one of my interviews with Wang Ruihong regarding the ritual performance of *Guanyin ci fu*, based on my audio recording.

**Time:** Feb 24, 2011

**Place:** An office next to the entrance of the Dule Temple, 41 Wuding St., Jixian

**Q:** *Guanyin ci fu* is a core program I saw during the Dule Temple Fair. Can you tell me how this traditional event has been remade?

**A:** The activity of Guanyin giving fortune and bringing fortune to home is a temple’s religious activity with five hundred years of history, sometime done with tablets (福牌), sometime with ribbons (福带), but always expressing the same meaning of fortune. It is regularly held during the important Buddhist festivals, such as Guanyin’s dates: Lunar Feb
This original religious activity is now combined with tourism, festivals, a kind of religious festival integrated into a cultural tourism program. So it is also held in the Spring Festival, May 1 Golden week and October 1 Golden week. It is religious tourism.

Q: Although a written record about the tradition “bringing fortune to the home” can be found, what is the basis for the detailed ritual process?

A: For the ritual details, there are differences from the past to the present. We could say it has been updated with contemporary features and expressed via Guanyin sending fortune to folks. There is an expectation that Guanyin is played by a beautiful maiden, and surrounded by followers. Guanyin sprays holy water and people receive the holy water. In the mountain area, there is a spring. This spring contains some mineral elements that can cure diseases. After monks perform a religious ritual process (jia chi) with the spring, the water is no longer that of an ordinary spring. It is viewed as holy water. People from various surrounding areas come with the wish of receiving the holy water. Now sometime we just buy some pure mineral water and invite monks come to jia chi.

Q: How do monks do jia chi?

A: I do not know much either. I only know jia chi is a serious religious ritual. Through the monks’ chanting of Buddhist scriptures, the water is no longer normal water but is endowed with some sacred powers.

Q: Is there any special arrangement in casting the role of Guanyin?

A: Selecting the actor of Guanyin has three criteria: not yet married; young under the age of twenty; a pretty look, a sacred and pure feeling.

Q: Is the actor of Guanyin a Buddhist?
A: It is rather better to cast a Buddhist, but it is difficult to find one to meet these criteria. When we find a player of Guanyin, we will ask her to learn some facts about Buddhism.

Q: Are monks involved in selection?

A: Yes, Monks participate in the selection. Actually, monks are involved in the whole planning and processing of the program. On the condition of not bothering to watch or enjoy the ritual performance, we try to coordinate with Buddhists as much as possible.

Q: Is the player of the monk a real monk?

A: Yes. He is a young monk. His name is Zhao Ci. He graduated from a Buddhism Institute. Guanyin ci fu is somewhat a stage play, so in order to have a good visual effect, the invited monk also need to meet some criteria, for example, not too old. Buddhism in historic development also tries to meet with people’s psychological aesthetics. Before the Tang dynasty, Guanyin’s image was male. After the Tang dynasty, Guanyin became female and more and more beautiful. If the ritual performance Guanyin ci fu does not meet common people’s aesthetics, it could not continue.

Q: How did the actor Guanyin feel about the ritual of distributing the holy water?

A: I often chat with her. She felt very happy with her part, for the fortune that Guanyin’s can deliver to people. Her spirit also got sublimation. From a religious angle, people viewed her as a real Guanyin. Many old Buddhists worship her and seriously receive the holy water from her. She likes to help people, to act as a presenter of Guanyin in the secular world.

Q: In normal days, when there is no ritual to perform, what do they do?
A: They have their own jobs. If there is no performance, they return to work at their regular jobs. The current Guanyin player is an actress from Jixian Singing and Dancing Group. Afterward, we plan to look for an actor of Guanyin among ordinary folks. Through selection, we expect to expand the influence of this activity, to inspire people to seek true kindness and beauty.

Q: How is the financial situation of this program?

A: The government only gives us policy support, but the fund depends on our Dule Temple Relics Institution. It runs according to the market. From the first two Dule Temple fair sessions, we had debt. Starting with the third year, we found a balance. From the recent two sessions, we earned a bit of profit. Earning economic profit is not a main goal for us. We mainly focus on the social interests. For each year temple fair, we set up a theme to express a social desire. This year’s theme is Harmony.

Q: Did the Qu yuan feng he company provide financial support?

A: The Company provided a certain fund, but they did not get involved in organizing the program. We created a platform for them advertise, such as through advertisement, logo, attending the opening ceremony, and so on.

I think Wang Ruihong’s words in this interview are basically true. To revive this old tradition, the organizer achieves multiple purposes, culturally, socially, morally, and economically. With the flourishing of contemporary cultural tourism in China, we may often hear some criticism that performed tradition loses authenticity and the original meaning of the tradition for the sake of commercial benefits. However, in this case, the organizers did not avoid saying that they want to make the tradition meet contemporary social aesthetics and that they want to market the program because they actually need money to run it. On the other hand, they
state that the principle of the ritual show *Guanyin ci fu* corresponds with the original tradition. That is, presenting Guanyin’s benevolence and expressing people’s desire to live a happy and safe life. In their opinion, tradition needs to continue in a developmental mode.

From the operation of the Dule Temple Fair, I saw that local cultural workers put this ideal into practice. For instance, in the courtyard of the Dule Temple, besides the religious ritual performance of *Guanyin ci fu*, the organizers also arranged other kinds of performances to meet audience’s multiple interests. On the west ground, there were *huahui* (folk dance and play) performances, performed by peasant teams selected from Jixian’s villages and *xiang* (township). On the east side of the Entry Arch, there were acrobatics and magic performance, invited from the famous acrobatic town Wuqiao, Hebei province, in China. Although it was a so-called traditional performance, I observed that the magic show was conducted in a western style. The magician wore a black western suit. The Hula-Hoop performance was also not a vernacular one; the Hula-Hoop was imported to China in the early 1990s and it became a very popular activity among Chinese youth.

Figure 4.8 Author and *Huahui* performers in the Dule Temple, 2011. Photo provided by author.
Actually, these phenomena I observed are not rare but very common in contemporary China, which has caused a heated debate across the national. While I was doing on-site observations in Jixian, sometimes I took a break to read newspapers in the Jixian Public Library. The library was nearby the Drum Tower Square at the Wenchang Street. In contrast to the crowd scene on the streets, there were usually only few readers sitting in the library, but loud noise from the street still could be overheard through the windows. There were many kinds of newspapers and magazines in the periodical reading room, except for the local weekly newspaper Xin Jizhou (新蓟州 The New Jizhou). The debates on how to treat tradition in contemporary social development was a hot topic and frequently appeared on the Chinese newspapers, and they always caught my attention. Below are some notes I took and translated from my reading newspapers in the Jixian library.

On January 25, 2011, the Chinese Culture Press published Shu Lin’s report with the title, “The Woodcut New Year Painting also Needs to Adapt with Social Changes.” The content was from a conference on Chinese Woodcut Painting’s Innovation and Development held in Kaifeng, Henan. According to the report, at this conference, experts commonly took the position that if the
traditional woodcut painting could survive in the fast pace of modern society, this folk art form must go forward with social progress, to adapt modern people’s aesthetics and interests. Xia Wanqun, vice president of the China Folk Art Association, states that woodcut New Year painting contains value as a cultural heritage. This view does not allow heritage to be randomly changed in the course of commercialization and marketization. Otherwise, the precious cultural and historical may lose value. On the other hand, today, traditional cultures face questions about how to adapt to and coordinate with contemporary life, and they face problems of how to achieve two aspects of stable national characteristics and up-to-date fashions. If we simply refuse commercialization and marketization, intangible cultural heritage might lose their vitality. Thus, the innovation of the traditional New Year painting should consider both content and form based on keeping traditional art style and cultural connotations (Shu 2011: 6).

On January 26, 2011, the newspaper Chinese Culture Press published Liu Qian’s article “Making a more Tasteful Atmosphere for Traditional Festivals.” The article summarizes a symposium titled, “Intangible Cultural Heritage Protection and Construction of Festival Culture.” In this symposium, several Chinese cultural experts expressed their opinions regarding issues of contemporary traditional festivals. Liu Kuili indicates that in the past Chinese traditional culture grew up and was passed down in the rural agricultural environment. In the course of urbanization, how to integrate urban life and rural life, tradition and fashion, is seriously questioned. Shang Gang from Qinghua University points out that the form of festival activities should adapt to the pace of contemporary social life and fit to contemporary people’s mental characteristics. For some intangible heritage preservation programs, we might take in the way of productive protection. Only through renovation and improvement, old heritages are able
to continue and develop rather than die out. For instance, our pride of porcelain, without improvement, would remain as earthenware (Liu 2011: 6).

On March 11, 2011, the Chinese Culture Press published an article called “Ashima Is not only a Heritage.” The author, Yang Fuquan, points out that Ashima, a traditional folk narrative poem of the Sani people in Yunnan, is already integrated with tourism economy and cultural industry. These modern phenomena of course have already become part of contemporary component of Ashima Culture (Yang 2011: 6). Dance artist Yang Liping, who has caused a stir in contemporary China by directed the notable dance plays Yunnan’s Impression and Yunnan’s Sound by adopting original dance forms and farmer dancers from Yunnan minority groups, points out that original does not mean primitive, but means origin. Human civilization is continuing its course of development, so it is not possible to require people to remain in the status of “dao geng huo zhong” (刀耕火种), which refers to primitive agriculture using a knife to plough fields and using fire to cleaning field for planting. According to Yang, what contemporary dancers should do is to keep the nature and the root of ethnic dances and continue on innovation of them. In this way, ethnic dances can still be performed in contemporary life and will have longevity (Yang 2011: 6).

These discussions make it clear that more and more voices have been speaking for developing old traditions and integrating them into the modernization process; these people believe that this is a reasonable way to preserve tradition and revitalize traditional culture. From a practical view, remaking tradition has been commonly applied and seen in various cultural practices, especially in the cultural tourism programs being instituted in China nowadays. Cultural tourism is a complex system. The audience visits a heritage site for various individual reasons, some want to witness an old culture rather than just reading about it in books and visual
materials; some go for research, some for an enjoyable vocation, and some for an amusing experience. Thus, operators have to consider multiple factors in planning traditional cultural events: contemporary audience interest and aesthetics, the financial situation, social effectiveness, in addition to political intervention and cultural issues. The continuity of tradition cannot continue without a contemporary audience and practitioners. In the context of China, normally, a planned cultural event could not succeed without acceptance from multiple dimensions of the government, local organizers, and audience.

**Inventing Tradition: Folk Arts in Local Cultural Innovation**

Besides the models of preserving, reconstructing, and remaking tradition I have illustrated above, inventing tradition is also a significant phenomenon in the course of Jixian modernization and tourism development. I define the innovation mode of creating tradition in a way that it is different from the remaking tradition mode, which is developing a local old tradition through updating it with contemporary social fashion and components. Inventing tradition here refers to using local environment resources to create new local culture forms and make them significant in local cultural identity. This is a cultivating process oriented to specific purposes. In the context of Jixian, I found that the cultural innovation has been facilitated by relevant supportive policies from the national and local government, as I discussed in chapter three, and by local individuals’ enthusiasm in seeking fulfilling individual activities and improving their life conditions. Cultural innovation is an important strategy in Jixian’s tourism development and is also a local cultural construction process. New local cultural traditions can emerge from this kind of social and cultural practice. In the following, I will use concrete evidence from my field observation to elaborate this model of tradition.
In the course of developing the local economy and cultural tourism, besides using existing cultural heritage to enhance the local cultural reputation, another strategy and interesting phenomenon is to make cultural flags by innovating cultural products through working with the government guideline of “one village, one particular product” (一村一品). In my field investigation in Jixian, I was very impressed by local enthusiasm in the pursuit of cultural creation. Although noted Buddhist temples have been located in Jixian over the last thousand years, as kind of imported culture, ancient creation, and sacred world, they are distant from ordinary people’s daily lives. The Confucian temple Wen Miao and the carpentry deity temple Luban Temple, which have a vernacular Chinese origin, commonly appear nationwide, not just in Jixian. Thus, Jixian people are proud of their splendid local history and ancient relics; however, they acknowledge that Jixian does not have an influential folk art tradition of their own. That is why a person in the Jixian Cultural Bureau gave me a negative answer when I interviewed him to ask about local traditions. For these reasons, in the new era, inspired by the guidelines from the national and local government, Jixian people have devoted themselves to creating art, not just being an audience. In recent decades, the idea of cultural innovation has inspired locals to pursue local cultural creations.

From my field research, the cultural innovation in Jixian generally falls in the following pattern: individuals utilize local natural resources to create vernacular art and to establish a local cultural identity as well to promote tourism business. Jixian locals note specific and valuable local natural resources such as stacked stones, aged wood, and purple sand clay. Thus, in recent decades, Jixian locals have been gradually developed stone art, root carving, and clay sculpture as remarkable vernacular folk arts that show in the flourishing cultural tourism market.
The Emergence of the New Stone Art Culture

Stone deposits in Jixian are rich and unique. The billion years of geological movements as I described in Chapter 2 left the Jixian mountains and lakes with various types of rare, valuable, and charming stones such as stacked stone, purple sandstone, and marble. However, in the past, Jixian people only got stones from surrounding mountains to build their houses, yards, stone tables, and stone mills. Now they are aware of the multiple values of this natural resource, which can be transformed by hand into art. This change was stimulated by economic benefits and modern sensation. By discovering modern tourist interest, local people rediscover the value of a local resource and use the resource in a new form with new purposes. Through innovation, the same natural materials in Jixian environment are now given different social meanings, functions, and values. I detect that in this creation process, people’s enthusiasm can be hardly defined by a single category, either art or business. It is a complex mixture from material to spirit, from reality to idealism. The stories from my observations and interviews in the stone art shops told me that.

Figure 4.10 Stone art shop in Jixian town. Photo by author, 2011.

Stone art gardens and stone art shops have become noteworthy parts of the landscape in Jixian since the county launched the tourism industry. The amount of stone gardens and shops
has been quickly increasing. Just within the year I was staying in the county, I observed that several new stone gardens were under construction, and new shops continued to appear in town. According to a report, in 2010, there are six formal stacked-stone carving companies in Jixian that produced 3500 carving works, and the value of their products reached twelve million RMB. There are also seventeen stone art enterprises in Jixian County, with an annual income of twenty million RMB. 8

Stone gardens in Jixian are mostly located on the sites of tourist attractions. For instance, in the Pan Mountain area, there is Shiqu Park (Stone Amusement Park) which was built by the Yushi village. In the Fujun Mountain Park, a new Shang Shi Yuan (Enjoyable Stone Garden) recently opened. In the Maojiayu Longevity Vacation Village, Yuan Gu Qishi Lin (Marvelous Proterozoic Stone Site) is a major scenic spot to attract visitors. The stones displayed at different tour sites show a great miracle of nature and are often given a meaning by locals through naming, such as 鹰石 (eagle stone), 蛙石 (frog stone), 头像石 (head rock), 玉兔石 (jade rabbit stone) and so on. Among Jixian local folk narratives, there are many stone legends related to local landscapes, history and people’s lives. For instance, a local legend tells a story about the origin of the Jade Rabbit stone. A pretty and smart Pan Mountain maiden named Jing Cao was insulted by the emperor, who temporarily lived in the Pan Mountain imperial palace. Jing Cao did not yield to the emperor’s request. The emperor said that if she could weave a live rabbit for him, she could go home. The maiden Jing Cao finished weaving and put her finger’s blood on the eyes of the rabbit, and then the rabbit became life, so the emperor had to release Jing Cao. The live rabbit claimed that she was the Jade Rabbit on the moon and came to the secular world to help people. The next day, when the emperor ordered a monk (fa shi) to subdue the sorcery of the rabbit, he was hurt by the rabbit and ran away. After that, people searched for the rabbit, but
they only saw a new huge stone in the shape of a rabbit on the hill. They believed that the jade rabbit was transformed into this stone (Jin 2006: 233-234).

Beside the natural stone landscape at the tourist site, stacked stone carving art production has also been rapidly developed into companies such as the Boya Carving Company and Ganyuan Stacked Stone Carving Company. The stacked stone gave carving works special value for contemporary consumers and tourists. I found a brochure in a stone art shop in Jixian town that describes in English about uniqueness and potential of the local stacked stone (叠层石 die ceng shì) carving products as follows:

World geological treasure–Laminated rock
The Middle Proterozoic Strata Section in Jixian, Tianjin is well known for its standard layer shaped is richly endowed by nature. Stromatolites (叠层石) are in essence product profile. The rock is a special type of Fossils, which mainly consists of Cyanobacteria, green algae and Marine plankton that are formed by Paleontology sedimentary between 8-18 billion years. Laminated rock is hard rock. The texture is clear, colorful, dignified, and elegant. Its “fingers” laminate records the Proterozoic evolution history and storages paleogeography, paleoclimate, paleontology, paleomagnetism and many other information of Geology. And it is honored as “Geological treasure” by the United Nations Geological Scientific organizations and foreign experts and scholars. The famous geologist, Li Siguang, evaluate that Jixian County profile is the best of the Eurasia.

Handcrafts are carved by stacked rocks and they have a very high scientific, ornamental, and collectible value. Visitors at home and aboard think it as their honor to possess stromatodites as souvenirs. As a national gem, laminated rock reserves in Jixian are very limited. His visibility and attention grow with each passing day. Handcrafts carved by stacked rocks are rare, permanent, and natural. Besides, they have a very high value of science, ornament, health care and collection. Recently science has proven that stacked rocks contain more than ten kinds of trace elements, which are beneficial to people’s health. Playing with stacked rocks in palm of the hand does good to the new supersede to the old of the body. Improve the exchange of human and the nature, raise blood, get through the meridians and make people live longer. With time going on, stacked rock has unlimited space in value as rare geological treasure.

The English description in this brochure, although may contain some errors, shows us how locals advertise their vernacular art and how they tried to meet contemporary consumer interest and aesthetics. For example, they like natural and rare things that bring benefits to
health, and they consider potential collection value, etc. According to a report on the website of the Jixian Travel Bureau, nowadays Jixian’s stacked carving works are not only sold in local tourist markets, but are also exported to the United States, Australia, Italy, South Korean and elsewhere—more than ten countries in the world. In addition, the stone carving works have been sent to some national artwork competitions and won awards. For instance, in the 46th Golden Phoenix Innovation Design Competition sponsored by the China Arts and Crafts Associates, Jixian had nine items in the competition and all of them received awards. The work “Early Spring” (萌春) received the golden award. In the 2011 China Jade Artwork Bai Hua Competition, the work “Mice in the Crops” (黍中有鼠) won the silver award. This evidence reflects the interactive relationship between culture and economy. Using local, unique, natural material to create souvenirs for tourists has its economic component. In the meantime, some fine works have also been produced. Some talented artists have also emerged. A guideline cited below, made by Jixian Travel Bureau for further developing local stacked stone carving products, reveals a link between artistic innovation and the tourism industry in local practices.

Objective: engage further development based on the present situation. For instance, using Jixian remarkable scenes like Drum Tower, Mt. Guayue in the Pan Mountians, the eleven faces of Guanyin, and the Huangyaguan Great Wall as the subject to produce the stacked stone artworks. The products can be made for using in an office such as a pen pot, brush shelf, ink stone, ashtray, seal, etc. Contemporary themes and nationally important events can also be the subject. The size of the product should be limited for easy carrying, and the design should be considered for both artistic and practical aspects. Provide mailing services to long distance tourists. The package should have a fine look. For tourists’ convenience in buying, the product stores should be set up in town, tourist spots, hotels and the main streets. (发展方向：可在现有产品的基础上进行深度开发，例如：以蓟县标志性景观点鼓楼、盘山挂月峰、独乐寺十一面观音、黄崖关长城凤凰楼等为题材，进行叠层岩的艺术加工，可做成办公用品，如笔筒、笔架、砚台、烟缸、印章等；也可以设计开发反应时代主题和国家重大活动的工艺品。体积不要太大，把艺术性和实用性结合起来，也可以为远程游客办理信用托运手续。产品包装要精美实用，利于携带，在市区、旅游区、宾馆以及通往景区的道路旁设立销售网点，方便游人购买。)
Thus, the government policy and guidelines, economic benefit stimulation, and individual creativity have worked together in producing new local artwork. The stone carving art in Jixian actually embraces multiple attributes: an art production, an art industry, a tourism production, local natural history, and cultural identity. It is a dual process of culture and economy, artwork and tourism in Jixian local practices. This verdict can be further demonstrated from my observation to the local stone art shops.

The number of Jixian stone art shops has grown fast in recent decade. The shops collect and make smaller beautiful stone art works and sell them to tourists or collectors as either artworks or souvenirs. These works are made using less professional carving techniques but demonstrate natural beauty and embrace ordinary craftsman’s aesthetics, feelings, and life dreams. I visited these stores and heard interesting stories from these people. One shop is Qi shi yan. Yan means fire and hot. In the name of the shop, the owner addresses exceptional stone artworks. The shop was in Mashengqiao Xiang, on the outskirts of east Jixian on the way to the tourist spot of the Qing East Tomb. On September 4, 2011, when I was wandering around to observe some folk art shops in this area, I came to this shop and met with the owner, Lin Ming, and his wife. Lin Ming’s wife dressed in a nice dark purple traditional Chinese skirt and showed me the stone works in the shop. This relatively small store contains various marvelous stones with various patterns, and a few root carving works among them. The price was marked on each item. I saw a stone with a scene of the sun rising priced at 2,000 RMB. Thus, my first impression was that the owner ran this shop for money. The sales woman voluntarily introduced me to the images and meanings of stones, such as one stone’s pattern that resembles a moon in the dark sky; another stone that looks like the sun rising from the ocean. From talking with her, I learned that the stone and root carving works were all collected and made by her husband, Lin Ming. She
and Lin Ming are villagers of Zhaoge Zhuang, Mashenqiao Xiang. Lin Ming did not learn this trade from his family, although his mother is skilled in sewing and cooking. After he graduated from high school, he worked many kinds of jobs. When he worked as a taxi driver, influenced by national and local economic atmosphere of “搞活经济 gao huo jing ji” (enlivening economy), he spontaneously got an idea of collecting stones and making stone crafts. The income he earned from his taxi driver job was used to subsidize his stone collection. It took ten years for him to move from an amateur status to full dedication to the stone art business. In 2009, the couple opened this shop. The wife looked after the shop and Ling Ming hunted stones and processed the stones based on their natural feature. He is very talented at doing this.

Figure 4.11 Lin Ming and his wife in their stone art shop. Photo by author, 2011.

When we were talking, Ling Ming came in the shop. He was around the age of 40. He said he just finished polishing a stonework at home because his tools and workshop were at home. He originally was a villager, but after many years working experiences away from agriculture, he did not look like a traditional peasant any more. He told me that hunting a good stone needs some luck, but without effort and diligence, good stones cannot be found. In his opinion, painting art depends on personal talent, but stone art could be made perfectly by nature.
It is not limited by human ability. He emphasized that he did it just as of a personal hobby and for earning some money to support their family. However, from his talk, I detected his ambitious dream and his longing for fame. He said that he wanted to build a stone town that gathers all the local stone art shops in town. He was proud that he did not advertise but relied on word of mouth to get his clients for his elegant stone art works. When this shop was celebrating its opening, the head of Jixian Cultural Bureau sent him calligraphy with the words “shi yun” (stone rhyme) to praise his works. From these words, I was convinced that his enthusiasm for stone art and his business goal became one thing in his mind.

I heard more stories at a group of stone art shops in the northwestern part of Jixian town. It was out of the West Pass on the Jinwei road, which was recently changed to Changcheng Road (Great Wall Rd.), a road from Jixian town to the tourist destination of Huangyaguan Great Wall. Here there were three stone art shops gathered one by one like the stone art town that Ling Ming dreamed. There was also the Yuan lin shi yi gong zuo shi (Garden and stone art work studio) near these shops. A lot of huge stones were there awaiting treatment.

Figure 4.12 Stone craftsman Liu Qingguo, Photo by author, 2011
When I walked to the shop called Qi mei shi xuan, a man was using an electric machine to polish a landscape image into a stone in front of the shop. There were some unfinished large stones outside. The man stopped his work and accompanied me into the shop. This shop had a quite large space with various stone and root carvings that were neatly placed row by row. The man’s name is Liu Qingguo. He told me that he shares the shop with two other people. He had been doing this for more than ten years. He originally was a farmer from Luozhuangzi village, Xiaying district. He liked to play with stones and used this trade to support his family. He was proud of telling me that his stone works were selected to participate in the Xian World Garden Expo in 2010. In addition, the logo for the Tianjin exhibition zone was created by him. Below is the transcript from an interesting conversation with Liu Qingguo I recorded.

Q: Are you the boss of this stone art shop or a craftsman working for the shop?
A: When I wear my working clothes, I am a craft worker; when I take them off, I am a boss. I have run the stone shop for more than 10 years. I also have a stone shop in my village, Luozhuangzi. These stones are all local materials.

Q: Are you keen for stone craft or just for money? Did you learn to make it by yourself or from someone else?
A: I cannot say this clearly. I just do it by myself. This kind of craftwork does not need very exquisite workmanship. It is mainly made from nature. We just slightly patch it up.

Q: Are they sold to tourists or any other customer groups?
A: We have several customer groups. We sell them to the local government. They use them as gifts because this is a featured local product. We also sell them to tourists. I do not have any ambitious goal. Just make it to earn a living.
Q: Did your village Luozhuangzi have this tradition before?
A: We do not have this tradition. It emerged just around ten years ago.
Q: Why did the old generations not have this tradition? Did not they also live with stones?
A: In the past stones were all used to build houses or to make lime. Just in recent years people found the beauty of these stones. At the beginning, we just picked nice looking stones to sell them on the road to tourists, and then we gradually expanded our scope and rented shops. Our place Jixian has this kind of natural resource.
Q: Did you father do this stone craft work?
A: In his times, people had not enough food to eat. Stones were just used for building houses.
Q: Why do some stone works not have a title tag?
A: Everyone has a different interpretation of a stone; the stone sellers also have different interpretations of a stone. If you like a stone, in your eyes, it is a good stone. The color, the image, and the pattern of stones are from natural magic. People just need to discover the beauty. The root carving works we have also come from natural magic. Stones and roots both feature natural beauty. We just do a little polishing work. Finding a good stone is more important.”

The words from this craftsman and businessman are simple, not overstated, but I can detect this man’s efforts to change from an ordinary villager to an artist whose creative stone artwork is displayed in the Xian’ World Garden Art Expo. As one of many stone art seekers in Jixian, he made his contribution to establish this new vernacular culture.
In this shop, I also talked with another owner, Li Haiyun. She is from Baimaquan village. She introduced me to the fact that Jixian not only had stacked stones (die ceng shi), but also had painted stones (dan qing shi), locally called the “black shrimp stone” (xia mo shi) and Yan Mountain lotus stones (Yan shan fu rong shi). These names were obtained from the color and the pattern of the stones. The image of stones was from nature. The work for them began with a hunt for stones excellent in either shape or color. Next, they needed to clean stones because stones were buried underground. Some stones are required some repairing and polishing. Finally, they needed to design a set to stand up the finished stone art works.

![Figure 4.13 Black shrimp stone (墨虾石). Source: Jixian Travel Bureau Website.](image)

Li Haiyun’s interpretation of the stone art made me felt that through running this stone art business this woman has transformed herself from an ordinary villager to a stone artist and appreciator. In her opinion, since Jixian is in the Middle Proterozoic Strata Section protection area and features precious billion–year-old stones, Jixian built a geology museum at the foot of Mt. Fujun. The stones in the museum are mainly sample stones, so from her point of view, the stones in the museum might not look better than the stones they owned. She told me that this kind of stacked stone does not exist in abundance, so in the past, local people generally did not
use it to carve an artwork. It was only starting from recent decades when people realized that beauty of these stone could earn money, that more and more people became involved in this trade. In addition, there has been an old belief from Chinese old saying “Shi lai yun zhuan” (If a stone comes, fortune comes). In Chinese pronunciation, the characters 石 (stone) and 时 (time) are homophonic. This belief also caused people to collect and buy the artistic stones. Recent new rules restrict digging the stacked stones because it has been listed as national and world geology treasure. As a result, this kind of stone has become more valuable. Li Haiyun said that finding a beautiful stone made her happier than selling a stone. Sometimes she spends long time to look for stones but she might not find a good stone. When she stared at an exquisite stone craft for a long time, she became fond of it and she did not even want to sell it. The feeling was quite complex. Besides selling natural stones, there were also some carving works on display, which were products from a stacked stone carving company. Li Haiyun told me that her cousin ran this company. The stone materials were local, but the carving craftsman was hired from other places.

From the phenomena I encountered, I conclude that culture is a product produced from the interactions of human beings, social economic conditions, and a particular natural environment. There is a Chinese saying that “Yi fa shui tu yang yi fang ren” (A particular environment brings up a particular people). We also can say that a particular environment shapes one particular culture. Culture cannot be created without its particular geological environment and material world. For Jixian, over a billion years of earth movement has shaped the place from ocean to mountain, and made particular stones in the local environment. The natural materials have been taken into the social environment and used by people in their lives. As a result, stone is inscribed in the local social life and has become a particular local stone culture. In addition, the function of stone has been linked with local economic conditions. In the past, when local
people lived in poor conditions in a primitive agriculture society, stones provided people materials for basic housing and working, from stone houses to stone yards, stone roads, stone mill, stone grooves, stone tables, and stone stools. All these creations originated from people’s basic life needs, life conditions, and primitive agricultural stone culture.

When Jixian entered the modern era, along with the change of economic pattern, the improvement of ordinary people’s life conditions, as well interactions with the modern world and modern life in general, Jixian people have gained a new ability to recognize and utilize stone resources. The old function of stones has gradually been superseded. The brick house is replacing the traditional stone house. The machine mill is replacing the old stone mill. In these circumstances, people find new functions, new values, and new aesthetics in stones and create the new stone culture. They still use stones for earning a living, but in accordance with the way of modern people’s aesthetics and interests. Nowadays while more and more people have disposable income, purchasing stones for appreciation and decoration is becoming fashionable among urban people. Thus, the evolution of stone culture in Jixian reflects a kind of economic culture. More people appreciate and purchase stone artworks, more ordinary stone craftsman are involved in the stone art businesses and more stone carving factories and stone craft shops are appearing. This phenomenon demonstrates that the stone culture in Jixian has been transformed from a kind of utility culture in the past to a kind of art-appreciation culture for today, along with changes of contemporary economic lives.

UNESCO Folk Art Master Yu Qingcheng

In recent decades, an important resident of Jixian who won the highest fame and has become a local culture flagship is the UNESCO-named folk art Master Yu Qingcheng and his clay sculpture works. From a broad scope, clay sculpture can be viewed as a component of local
history in Jixian. In various temples, the statues of deities and supernatural beings are often made of clay. The Guanyin’s statue (16.08 m) in Dule Temple is the tallest colorful standing statue in the nation. However, in the secular world in Jixian, clay sculpture was not commonly acknowledged as a folk craft tradition. Yu Qingcheng is the first person who has made this art craft as a local significant cultural touchstone, and his clay sculpture works have been used to promote local tourism development by both members of the government and the community.

Figure 4.14 Yu Qingcheng in his clay sculpture workshop. Photo by author, 2011.

Yu Qingcheng is a Jixian native. He was born in 1944 in a peasant family in Cuijia Zhuang village, Youguzhuang Xiang, Jixian. He spent his childhood in the village. The hardships his family experienced did not deprive him of his hobby of playing with art. He drew on the ground and made things with mud while he was playing and working in the field. He left his village when he went to middle school in Bangjun Township. During the Cultural Revolution, he was forced to return to the countryside with his family because his family was in the bad class group called fu nong (a rich farmer group before the land reform movement in China). His dream to enter an art college was dashed. During that time, he worked full time in the field, the same as other peasants in his village. Boring labor did not eliminate his thinking,
imagination, and his expressive desire. From his life in the countryside, he re-familiarized his mature mind with the land and people in his hometown, and he used his hands to draw on the earth and used mud to make things to express what he saw and felt. From that time, he started to produce his clay sculpture work because clay was the easiest-accessible material while he worked in the field. His hands always played with mud, and his home piled up with various mud figures. The scenery and local people of the countryside became the subject of his clay works. He also did not give up his earlier dream to enter an art academy, so he mailed pictures of his clay artworks to the Tianjin Art Academy, and his talent was recognized by art teacher Wang Lancheng. However, due to the problem of his family background, the office in his township refused to give him approval to enter the Tianjin Art Academy even though he successively got admissions from the school for three years.

The end of the Cultural Revolution totally changed Yu Qingcheng’s life and gave him an opportunity to pursue his dream. In 1977, Yu Qingcheng came back to the town and was admitted to the Jixian Cultural House. Since then, he has professionally worked on clay sculpture. From 1978 to 1980, as a cultural worker, he came to the Lianhe village in the Pan Mountain area to help the village develop rural cultural activities. He started a clay sculpture workshop in the village and trained the villagers to make clay crafts. Finally, he and his apprentices made a series of clay sculpture works to portray the history of the village. In 1983, he finally fulfilled his dream of ten years ago and entered the Tianjin Art Academy to study sculpture for three years. He worked hard to explore new ideas and techniques, and finally in 1986 he got an award for his work “The Pan Mountain Color Sculpture.” Since then, his clay sculpture works and his name gradually spread from Jixian to the rest of the nation, and even around the world. In 1988, Yu Qingcheng was awarded the title of Folk Art Enterpriser by the
Cultural Minster of China. In the 1990s, he entered a golden age of clay sculpture creative works. He created thousands of works and gained wide influence. In 1996, UNESCO named him “Folk Art Master.” In 1999, he got a golden award in the National Applied Art Competition. In the 2001 China Folk Art Expo, he won the golden award again. He also attended many international art exhibitions, and his clay sculpture works gained world recognition.

To study Yu Qingcheng and his clay sculpture, I focus on two exploration areas related to my research topic. One is how Yu Qingcheng’s work can be interpreted in the terms of tradition and creativity. Another one is how Yu Qingcheng’s artwork operates within local contemporary social and economic construction and cultural tourism development, and how to think about the commercialization of artwork. In my field research in Jixian, Yu Qingcheng is a unique person among my interviewees. He has international fame, but he is a very simple and frank man and easy to talk with. His main works are built on the subject of Chinese rural people and tradition; however, he declines to be an heir of tradition.

Before I met with Yu Qingcheng, I had heard of him from various resources of Jixian. There were online articles and photos introducing his clay sculptural artworks. In the local gazetteer Jizhou feng wu zhi, Yu Qingcheng is listed in the chapter about local cultural celebrities. There is a Qingcheng Clay Sculpture Art Gallery in Shiqu Park as one of tourist spots. The sex education base in Shiqu Park assigned by The National Birth Control Committee of China was also inspired by his work Bang bu zhu de di fang (The Place that Cannot be Bound), an image of a penis made of iron material housed in Shiqu Park. For this work, he received praise for challenging traditional social morals. He also received blame for creating an immoral object. In the Jixian Cultural Bureau, I saw a row of wall panels introducing local intangible cultural heritage: Northern Shaolin gong fu, paper cutting, tie ban da gu (drum),
Qingchi lu liu (stone roller) and Yu Qingcheng’s clay sculpture art. Obviously, in the local intangible cultural preservation project directed by the Jixian government cultural agency, Yu Qingcheng and his clay art has been placed on the list of a remarkable local intangible culture heritage as a representative of the local traditional culture. Moreover, a construction investment plan for the Jixian Folklore Museum posted on the website of Jixian Travel Bureau specially mentions that Yu Qingcheng clay sculpture works will occupy one of eight exhibition halls. However, during my interviews with Master Yu Qingcheng, he downplayed all honors and titles he had already received. He claimed that he liked to be recognized as a creator of local tradition, rather than as an heir of local tradition.

My first interview with Yu Qingcheng was in his workshop in Jiage Zhuang. Master Yu was a very frank old man. He spoke with enthusiasm. He had just returned from South Korea the day before. He told me that a Yu Qingcheng clay sculpture gallery just opened in South Korea. In the workshop, I also met his apprentice, Zhang Dong, a graduate student from Tianjin Art Academy. In my impression, this local folk artist has placed himself in connection with the world. From talking with him, I observed that he had a vision of the world stage and he was thinking how to surpass his previous work and blaze a new trail with his personal art language. This might be the essential difference between traditional folk artists and modern folk artists.

Below is the excerpts from our conversations I audio recorded.

Q: Jixian has a long history. However, to define significant, special, local, traditional art, I asked someone who worked in the Jixian Cultural Bureau. I could not get a clear answer to my question. They pointed out you as a local cultural touchstone. It seems that clay sculpture is commonly seen nationwide, not just in Jixian. In your opinion, do you think your clay sculpture works are suitable to be viewed as a local culture tradition?
A: Like other places in China, Jixian’s temples have deity statues made from clay sculpture in the past. However, they made for religious purpose. Thus, I think there are some relations between the old deity statues and my work because both are made by using mud, but there are different purposes and functions, so I don’t think my works have a close relations to local old stuff.

Q: Mud is a kind of common material for ordinary people to use, so ordinary people use this material either to make utility wares or to entertain themselves. I assumed this is also the situation when you initially used mud to make something.

A: As a peasant living in the countryside, I did not know what was called art. I also did not have a family tradition of doing clay sculpture. I just wished to use mud to express my mood and I could easily get this material when I worked in the field in the countryside. Gradually I realized I could use this as a way to represent the nature of the people in my environment. I also got a chance from Tianjin newspapers to know that Tianjin has a famous clay craftsman, Niren Zhang, and saw his works in the newspaper. I thought I could make it, too. I use mud to represent people, so people praised me, [saying things like,] “Yu Qingcheng is marvelous.” For me, doing this, it could provide support for my life; in addition, it could allow me to satisfy my spiritual art dream.

Q: Is the Qingcheng Clay Sculpture Gallery in the Yushi village’s Shiqu Yuan your first gallery?

A: It is my first gallery exhibition. Yushi village was poor at that time and Yushi villagers also did not understand the value of clay crafts I made. They even called me a hoodlum because I made naked clay figures. The village decided to use my clay sculpture works to promote village economy. The village women learned to made clay crafts and
earned some money, like 50 yuan, 30 yuan etc. They were satisfied and felt it was worthwhile to do this trade. The clay sculpture craft has benefitted the village’s development.

Q: I visited folk art town Gaomi County in Shandong. There was a village called Niejia Zhuang. This village was famous for making clay sculpture. The most famous product was the clay tiger. Several family workshops made this craft. From my observation, the differences between you and them are that, first, they had a family tradition of doing this. There have been hundreds of years of history in making clay sculpture, so the outstanding craftsmen in the village were named as the folk art heirs by the local and national government. However, I saw that the craftsman’s life was still hard. How to make a connection between continuing tradition and secure craftsman’s lives remains a question.
You have not only earned fame from your clay sculpture, but also earned economic profit, so your life is secured. Another difference is that their works feature a common style but lack an individual style. They follow a formulized traditional style and pattern to make clay tigers. In contrast, you do not have a family tradition of doing this. In your works, I can see your personal expression and characteristics. Third, you are the pioneer in making local clay crafts and you influence and promote local people to do this. What do you think of these differences from your own position?

A: Why are we different? Why do they lack money? This is what I want to talk about. They made good stuff, but they have not connected their stuff with the world. They have not marketed their products. My idea is to market my works and let the whole world appreciate my works and want to buy them. Traditional stuff can continue because they are good, but if they cannot surpass their limit and cannot conquer the world of beauty, then there is a problem for their survival. Our nation’s voice now addresses cultural heirs. I agree with this
because we cannot lose our culture. At the Paris Art Exhibition in France, one thousand of my clay sculpture works (eleven boxes) all sold out. At first, I did not understand why. Later I realized because I show them Chinese tradition and life, the pure Chinese stuff. As we visit a foreign place, we always want to buy a vernacular thing. Since then, my clay works price goes up and becomes worth over ten thousand RMB. I also earned my reputation because I made my own works.

Q: How do you evaluate your previous works when you were named as Master of Folk Art by UNESCO?

A: I have already moved past those works. I felt good when those works were sent to the UNESCO committee for assessment and I received the fame as a Master of the Folk Art. However, right now, if I make similar works, I will not feel happy. I should be making new works. No matter what fame you achieve in the past, it is useless. No matter if you made the best work in the world, it is useless. The ideal in my mind is that I need to have my own ideology to guide my work in clay. If this ideology cannot be found in others and is different from others, I am satisfied. This is what I want. We often emphasize inheritance, but I think innovation is more important than inheritance. If someone gives me a title of the heir of an intangible cultural heritage, I will give it back. Why would I? I do not want this title. I want to create something new. The ideal of heritance has become a kind of restraint for people’s creative potential. Like Chinese architecture, no matter wherever you go nowadays, you can see the architecture structures in the dou gong (斗拱) style. Why do we not develop a new style and new tradition? Why do we always make a similar one? Why must my works inherited from my father and grandfather? I am not heir of anyone’s tradition. I just make my own.
The second time I interviewed Master Yu Qingcheng was at his home on Sifang Street, a flat house with a court nearby a noisy commercial street. The outside noise did not affect the spiritual process of this folk artist who stayed inside his house, his clay sculpture art world. In his large meeting room, his clay sculpture works were crowded on tall shelves around all four walls. Most works portray traditional peasant life and images. In preparation for my visiting to the Qingcheng Clay Sculpture Art Gallery in Shiqu Park, I had learned that Yu Qingcheng’s successful and influential early work is *The Yangzi River and Yellow River*. This work presents a rural woman feeding her child with her naked breast while carrying another child on her back. In one interpretation, the mother symbolizes the Yangzi and Yellow Rivers, feeding the nation of China. In this hall, the clay figures of rural peasants or children in various situations express this artist’s special language. Master Yu pointed to a rural old man among his clay figures and said, “This clay man looked very poor, diligent, simple, honest, and dull. It was our nation’s characteristics. I use this image to express my thought about our nation. My works are very plain and I want this plain style. This is an earlier work.” He then pointed to one recent work on the table and said, “This works is called ‘Sound of String’ and expresses my interpretation of life from my ideology. The foot fingers of this old guy seem making the sound of music. How beautiful is it! The beauty is created from my ideology, not from natural life. Thus, my works in the 1990s were created via my eyes. My recent works were created via my mind.” In our following conversation, I continued to question Master Yu.

**Q:** When you attempt to create your own art language and style, have you considered expanding your influence in local culture?

**A:** I think that to make a world-famous artwork and to develop local culture is one thing. Local culture also needs creation. You create something that the world does not have,
and then it will flourish. If you only repeat things others have done, it will be a dead end. In Jixian, there was not a particular local art in the past because local people did not pay attention to it and there was no atmosphere to support it.

Q: Do you think your Yu clay sculpture could form a Jixian folk art tradition similar to Yangliuqing woodcut New Year paintings and Niren Zhang colored clay sculptures? To establishing an influential local tradition usually needs a remarkable figure and product. Jixian now develops root carving, gourd iron paintings, and stone art for the tourism market. But these new local arts may not have matured to be a local cultural signifier. Any tradition has its starting point. If Jixian could cultivate an atmosphere for the art of clay sculpture, maybe Yu clay sculpture could become a local tradition through time. How do you think to balance your personal art creation and develop a local cultural tradition?

A: Either I can spend my time training more local people to make clay craft, or I can spend more time engaging and upgrading my personal artwork. These are two ways. In my mind, the work for earning money and the work for seeking an art language are different. The former does not need my brain, just my hands. I can do it with my eyes closed. This is the mass culture, for earning a living, for entertaining, for making an atmosphere. Either spending my time training Yushi village’s people to make clay sculpture or focusing on creating my own art language, I still have not had a good choice. Now actually I do both. I just heard from the Jixian government. They will invest the funds to build a Yu Qingcheng Clay Sculpture Gallery in Fujun Mount Park. So the government intends to use my works to make an influential local culture.

In interviews with Master Yu, I tried to determine his role in the relationship of inheritance and creation, culture and economy. I summarize my findings in these aspects:
First, Master Yu holds the ideal of creativity. As a folk artist, Master Yu is quite different from common folk artists in practicing folk arts and crafts. In traditional Chinese society, folk artists passed on their special craft skills through family heritage or apprenticeship. A folk art tradition is normally supported by a local community through a common practice. The ideal in a folk art tradition is to make this work perfect in some forms or patterns, and all local practitioners follow the model and formula to do it. For example, Gaomi’s *pu hui* New Year painting and *Nijiao hu* clay tiger sculpture, Yangliuqing woodcut New Year Painting, Niren Zhang’s colored clay sculpture, some formalized style and patterns have been repeated from generation to generation. Yu Qingcheng, in his folk art practice, inherited his skill neither from his family tradition nor from apprenticeship. He is a gifted artist and his clay artworks were fired from the earth in the field, from his environment and from his thought. I believe that from his later art academy education, he gained a vision and ideology for making creative artwork. He declines the title of heir to a tradition, and he challenges and questions the way of inheriting tradition. His ambitious goal is not to imitate a perfect work from an existing formula, but to explore and express his own art language, a new language in the world. He criticizes the common practice in Contemporary China of continuing tradition by copying what has come before, and he gradually created a unique, Yu-style uncolored clay sculpture. The figures he took from his rural environment are expressed through his eyes, his feelings, his language, but are not lifelike. Thus, his art ideology stresses on creativity of tradition.

Second, Master Yu keeps an open mind to commercial art, mass culture, and the interaction between art and economy. Newspaper reporter Zhang Qingyun comments on Yu Qingcheng’s works in Yushi village: “When more and more people come to visit his works in Yushi Zhuang, not only will his works become famous, but also will bring in millions in incomes
to the village, and it shows the progress of people’s ideas, and acceptance to the new things.”

Master Yu Qingcheng does not hesitate to admit that he earns profit from his artwork. He is proud of declaring that his clay men are each worth ten thousand. He is proud that he helps Yushi villagers to make clay crafts and to promote the village’s tourism market and cultural activities. In his mind, he makes a clear distinction between his sculpture for money and for art, but either way he has engaged, his work and his influence have established a local cultural flag and will make a local tradition in Jixian history.

**Yushi Village’s Craftsman**

As Master Yu stated in our conversations over and over again, to make a local tradition, not only needs a prominent figure and creative works, but also needs a conducive atmosphere, social support, and people to maintain it. In the course of promoting tourism via creating a featured local culture, Yushi villagers have become involved in Yu Qingcheng’s clay sculpture work and exerted a social force in supporting this local art. From interview with these ordinary craftsmen, I was aware that, in contrast to Master Yu seeking a creative art language, these craftsmen do clay sculpture with more practical purposes. They have their own dream to keep doing it, and they have also made contributions to create a local tradition.

One afternoon, I visited the *Shan ye ni ba* Folk Clay Sculpture Workshop located inside Shiqu Yuan and met with Yushi four craftsmen who were making clay sculptures. One is Wang Zuozhong, whom I mentioned previously in chapter 3. The other three were all middle-age Yushi village women: Ms. Zhao, Ms. Shi, and Ms. Zhu. The workshop had two large rooms. One room had many clay sculpture works either on tables or in cases. People sat in another room around a large table working clay with their hands. From talking with them, I learned that they all attended the first clay sculpture training session with Master Yu in 1999 and had continued to practice it
for more than ten years. They do not have a family tradition of clay sculpture, either. Ms. Shi
told me that her younger brother Shi Qinghong, who was in Lianhe Cun (village), learned clay
sculpture from Master Yu Qingcheng and was his best apprentice. He had followed Yu doing
clay sculpture for more than thirty years. Ms. Zhao complained that a village woman needs to
take care of more things than men do in daily life; they must take care of elders and children, do
housework, and also work the field. She kept doing clay sculpture just because of personal
interest, because of the village committee’s beneficial policy that paid them 1200 RMB per
month. She also did it to show her works to tourists, and to gain the title of clay sculpture village.
She admitted that they might not be able to make fine ones.

Actually, the clay sculpture products they made still had not sold well. But when people
visit Shiqu Park, they know they have come to a clay sculpture village. Tourists like this kind of
folk art, but might not buy it. So they artisans still cannot rely on making clay sculpture to live.
Wang Zuozhong argued with Ms. Zhao, saying that if they spent more time practicing clay
sculpture and produced better products, they would firstly let Tianjin people know about our clay
sculpture village, then let national people know it, and finally let the world know it. If they could
become well known in the world, they could get good prices, and then they could rely on it to
live. He further remarked that to develop clay sculpture crafts requires two good things, one is
beauty, and the other is to benefit their life. Unlike doing other businesses, such as developing
real estate that is limited in resource and land, this craft had no limit and could be passed on to
future next generations. It could become the village’s tradition and cultural identity. While we
were chatting, a group of tourists with Tianjin accents came into the workshop. They were
interested in watching what Yushi craftsmen were making and seeing what they already made.
They asked about some specific works.
Wang Zuozhong explained to them that the works were based on the rural life he experienced. For example, he pointed at a clay sculpture called “Boys Played with Bee Cells” and said that it came from his childhood experience. On this sort of occasion, the visitors might not pay much attention to the quality of the artwork, but just enjoyed a taste of local people’s life. Some of the visitors even grabbed clay in their hands, trying to make one by themselves. I wondered at this moment: Do Yushi village craftsmen make a local cultural scene, a local tradition, an art, or tourist souvenir? It seemed to me that all meanings were embraced. Creating a culture and promoting tourism were integrated in this place, in people’s doing and in the products. Shiqu Park, if only with the exhibition gallery for Master Yu Qingcheng’s clay sculpture works, can still attract tourists, but it cannot be Yushi village’s tradition. With these craftsmen’s work, Yushi villagers are making their cultural tradition for today and for the future.
**Dynamics in Processing Tradition: “Culture-self,” “Political Culture,” or “Economic Culture”**

The cases narrated in this chapter illustrate how, in the contemporary local endeavors, Jixian’s various social forces have become involved in the processes of tradition from government agencies to cultural relic institutions, from entrepreneurs to individuals, from artists to villagers. They have been treating and utilizing cultural resources in various ways and with various strategies for the purpose of establishing a distinctive local cultural identity and promoting local development. Cohen indicates that “people construct community symbolically, making it a resource and repository of meaning, and a referent of their identity” (Cohen 1985: 118).

From my observation, processing heritage and cultural tradition in Jixian can be generalized in three models: *preserving tradition*, which maintains the original form of the relics as a historical display to fulfill historic and contemporary social functions; *reconstructing and remaking tradition*, which reconstructs ancient objects and recovers traditional customs and activities with added contemporary components to meet contemporary social desires; and *inventing tradition* which uses local environmental resources to create a new local culture. The dynamics in local cultural endeavors can be derived from multiple channels rather than a single social factor. For instance, in the case I recounted, the old form of the Guanyin Pavilion in the Dule Temple was preserved with its original face. Such an endeavor seeks to preserve the original pattern and historic information of the relics and also to satisfy tourists’ expectations to explore an authentic ancient relic. Reconstruction of the ancient town strengthens local cultural history and also provides an enjoyable public place for locals and tourists. The Dule temple fair is a revived tradition with multiple purposes: recovering old culture, enriching winter tourism activity, entertaining, praying, and stimulating local commercial trade. The emergence of the
new craft arts such as stone art, root carving, and clay sculpture in local cultural and tourism landscapes has been driven by the government’s guidelines for enriching cultural content of local tourism and creating featured tourism products. It is also driven by individual creativity and enthusiasm in pursuit of personal artistic interests and potential business. Master Yu Qingcheng’s ideal to create a new art language in his clay sculpture work shows an artist’s enthusiasm in the pursuit of art, and he also admitted that his clay artworks were worth big money. His reputation and works have been used by the local government agencies and villages to promote local cultural tourism.

In John McDowell’s argument about the multivocality of “folklorized traditions,” a processing of local traditions for external consumption, serving multiple purposes and multiple audiences, he asserts that these expressive contact zones should be embraced by folklorists who seek out the vitality of cultural expression in processed artistic productions (McDowell 2010). The cases from this chapter demonstrate that by preserving tradition, recovering tradition, remaking tradition, and inventing tradition to compose and construct local culture, culture has been driven by complex multiple social, cultural, economic factors and purposes. Thus, we cannot attribute a cultural phenomenon to a single cause. In a word, this is an interactive process of culture, politics, and economy. Tradition is the integrated product of local natural environments, broad social engagement, and many individual endeavors.
Chapter 5
Framing Tradition and Cultural Mixing: Old and New, Rural and Urban, Local and Global

In the book *China: an Anthropological Perspective*, Leon Stover and Takeko Stover write:

The problem of modernization is to remove the insulation that separated the little tradition from the great tradition under the pseudomorphic state and to create a participant society joined with an authentic nation-state. In other words, the change from traditional to modern China can be described as the change from an orthogenetic state of culture to a heterogenetic one (Redfield and Singer, 1954). Chinese civilization originated as a single line of development (orthogenesis) out of its own Neolithic past, its isolation coming to an end with the press of multiple influences on its development (heterogenetic change), which occurred after its absorption into the world oekumene, thereby extending the unified range of man’s civilization (Stover 1976: 7).

This analysis, published in thirty years ago, is still a good interpretation of the recent decades of China’s transformation and modernization. In the past few decades, Chinese culture has experienced a radical change and cultural clash. Modernization means modern ideas, a modern life style, modern technology, and modern ways of social connection. Modernization processes have broken spatial isolation and provoked great mobility and interaction among human beings, places, communities, and cultures. As a result, the most significant influence on tradition is that tradition has been reconstructed for multiple purposes, from multiple angles, with multiple functions, and has absorbed multiple cultural influences in the postmodern era. Social politics stress continuing tradition to revive nationalism. Entrepreneurs utilize tradition to stimulate modern consumption. Rural people use tradition as an instrument to get rid of poverty and to make a modern life. Urban people seek traditional life in rural settings to revamp their tiredness to urban. Since Chinese traditions are based on a traditional agricultural economy and social institutions derived from the economic base, as the social base breaks down, traditional life
inevitably encounters the challenges in a modern environment and is forced to integrate into modern processes. Reconstructing and reformulating tradition has been a way to revitalize and continue tradition to serve modern life that are commonly seen everywhere. I use the term “framing tradition” to describe this modern process of tradition.

**The Breakdown of Boundaries in Local Cultural Practices**

“Framing tradition” has been a core term recurrently used throughout my research, which encompasses my main argument about the relationship of tradition and modernity, and contemporary practices of preserving, revitalizing, and inventing tradition. The word “framing” means to fit as for a specific end or purpose, to construct, to put together, to shape, to build up. I use this word to describe tradition in a changeable, adapted, updated, reshaped, and creative model, a model of process rather a static state. “Framing tradition” embraces the meaning of processing tradition to fit contemporary social needs. The outcomes of “framing tradition” in the modern era can be perceived as either to make tradition modern or to make a new tradition. Through constructive processes, tradition may produce changes in situations from daily life behaviors to situated performances, from practical utility to abstract spiritual symbol, from primitive products to synthetic modern products. In this chapter, I will use my field observation in Jixian to recount the phenomena of framing tradition and cultural integration and to illustrate the reality of local traditions in a transforming social environment. I will argue that modern processes break the boundary between tradition and modernity and make tradition modern.

Comparing the old and the new map of Jixian town, I found that the north-south direction Yongchang Road acts likes a boundary. The west side of the road is the old town area, which can be located on the old town map. The east side of the road is the new town area. The
reconstruction of the ancient town in the western area indeed increases the traditional cultural atmosphere and provides a harmonic environment for the individual ancient relics formerly scattered throughout town, such as the Dule Temple, the White Buddha pagoda, the Confucian Temple, Luban Temple, and the Drum Tower. The physical appearance of the ancient town has become a significant cultural and tourist sight and a popular gathering place for locals. It had also been a place for me to focus my study of tradition in a contemporary social context.

When I began my field research in Jixian, I lived in my elder sister’s home on Xinghua Street, on the east side of Yongchang Road. There were no ancient-style structures but many with modern facilities in the area: the Jixian County Hospital, the Third Elementary School of Jixian, Jiale Supermarket (家乐超市)--which was the largest modern supermarket in Jixian, similar in size to any other large supermarkets in Western countries and other modern cities of China. On the west side of the street was the biggest farmer’s market, Xinghua shi chang (兴华市场). Along Xinghua Street, there were numerous stores selling mobile phones, electronics, clothes, and foods. City buses, cars, and motorcycles shuttled back and forth. Living in this environment, it appeared no different from living in any other middle-size modern city in China nowadays. For me, marching from the Eastbound Xinghua Street, a street that bears a popular modern Chinese street name meaning “promoting China,” to the Westbound Wenchang Street, a street with a typical ancient Chinese street name that means “cultural prosperity,” it seemed that I was crossing through a time tunnel from a modern world to an ancient world.

However, is the ancient town on the west side a real old cultural world? Is the new town in the east side a purely modern world? Does the ancient town really stay true to its ancient cultural legacy through the physical reconstruction? Is the ancient town a separated cultural island from modern world or just another style of modern life for local people? In my
observation, in these two spaces, the situation was complex. Tradition and modernity co-existed or mixed in both spaces in either visible or invisible forms. Although the ancient town area boasts ancient-style buildings, it was still saturated with modern stuff and modern consumption; although the new town area did not have ancient-style buildings, the old tradition was still inscribed in people’s mind and daily life.

**During the Holiday Season: the Lunar Chinese New Year**

2011, when I stayed in Jixian, was the zodiac year of the Rabbit, my zodiac symbol. In Chinese, it is my *ben ming nian*. According to the old Chinese believe, the *ben ming nian* means a challenging year for the person who bears the zodiac symbol of the year. I am not a superstitious person, but I was curious about how this *ben ming* year would affect my field work—a bit cautious as well. Fortune telling is a traditional folk activity, but it was banned as superstition once the PRC was established. Nowadays this kind of activity has been revived, although the CCP government still does not officially permit it. Along the ancient streets, Wenchang and Wuding, I saw some fortunetellers asking passers-by to sit for a prediction, but I never did it because I did not want to get an unlucky prediction. I am delighted that the *ben ming* year was fine for me, although I admit that I experienced some psychological struggles when I stayed out in town during the dark nights, when I lived in a strange neighborhood, when I climbed up a quiet valley or a mountain alone, and when I walked on a quiet rural road to a village. Conversely, I was fortunate to get to know many kind Jixian people, and to receive a great deal of support from them to get my field research done.

It was in late January, just a week away from the 2011 lunar Chinese New Year Spring Festival, when I started my field observation in Jixian. To observe the Dule Temple Fair and the
local Spring Festival activities, I commuted from east Xinghua Street to the western, ancient
town daily. During the Chinese New Year session, Wuding Street and Wenchang Street were the
liveliest place in town for holding the biggest event of the Dule Temple Fair. The Drum Tower
Square, Wenchang Street, and Wuding Street were decorated into a red, colorful world because
red in Chinese tradition is auspicious and symbolizes good wishes. Red lanterns were hung on
poles along the side of the streets. Many vendors on the street spread out seasonal celebration
products such as red New Year couplets and posters, red paper cuttings, China nets, and
traditional Chinese New Year paintings. The Rabbit zodiac sign was a very common pattern,
appearing on these seasonal ornaments.

![Selling Spring Festival ornaments in the Xinghua Street. Photo by author, 2011.](image)

Nowadays, on the occasion of the Chinese New Year session commonly called the Spring
Festival (chun jie 春节) or guo nian (过年), even people who like to furnish and decorate their
home in a modern style still want to buy these traditional ornaments to put on their home for
celebration and to pray for a blessed New Year for their families. No matter what type of
dwelling people live in, most of Chinese households painted New Year couplets or an upside-
down poster fu (福) or ji (吉) on their door with the meaning of “arriving of luck.” The Chinese
word 倒, translated in English as “upside down,” is pronounced as “dao.” The sound “dao” in Chinese can be written in more than one word, either 倒 or 到 that stand for different meanings. 倒 means upside down. 到 means arriving. Thus, the word 倒 (upside down) is a homophone for the word 到 (arrival). The upside-down character suggests the idea of wishing for the arrival of good fortune (Gunde 2002: 199). Actually, this is a new custom. Feng Jicai’s article “The fu (福) Character Should not Be Pasted Upside Down” criticizes this new custom. I translate his words as follows:

In lunar December of the year before last year, I was returning from Beijing to Tianjin. Passing through a street, I saw every household door had an upside down fu character pasted, like an upside reflection in the river. In the traditional custom, the upside down fu was mainly pasted in two places. One place was on the water container and the trash can because water and trash would be taken away. To avoid household fortune was also being taken away, people wisely pasted an upside down fu with the homophone meaning dao to against fortune away. Another place was on cabinets in the room, and it means fortune coming into rooms and cabinets. However, the fu character on the gate was always in its upright position. The fu on the household gate means reception of fortune. The main entrance is a serious and respectful place, so the fu character presenting here should be dignified with the upright look. The upside down fu character is against the spirit of Chinese “door” and “New Year” cultural tradition (Feng 2007: 170).

Although Feng Jicai is a national cultural leader and celebrity in China, his criticism of this phenomenon unfortunately has been ignored by common people in their practice of the Chinese New Year tradition. In my observation of the Chinese New Year decoration customs in Jixian in 2011, many household entrances still had an upside down fu character pasted on gates or doors. It shows that the things people do are determined by their own beliefs, wishes and hobby, but not determined by cultural elites’ opinions. If cultural scholars stand from their own theoretic perspective, rather than from the cultural practitioners’ view, to guide contemporary cultural practices, people may not accept cultural scholars’ suggestions. Actually, cultural tradition is in flux through time and through common people’s practices.
Because of the prevalence among people nowadays to use traditional-style ornaments to decorate their homes, a vendor could earn big money by selling seasonal ornaments. Besides the red traditional items, sellers also prepared modern popular items for sale, such as cartoon images from the current TV show *Xi Yangyang Yu Hui Tai Lang* (Happy Goat and Big Grey Wolf) for the favor of young kids. In one seller’s words, no matter old or new, they just chose what was easy to sell. In Jixian town, actually there were two places allowed by the local authority where vendors could sell the New Year ornaments. One place was in the ancient town on the Wenchang Street, and another place was on the Xinghua Street near my elder sister’s home. Thus, I could daily go to these two places and make a comparative observation of them: one in a restored ancient style setting, another one in a modern setting.

From my observation, I found that the situation in modern Xinghua Street was similar to the one in ancient Wenchang Street. A vendor who was selling New Year couplets in the Xinghua Street told me that he paid 500 RMB for the commercial administrative fee, but he could earn several thousands this season. If he was lucky, he could sell as many as ten thousand items. This situation reveals that consumption for tradition does not rely on a physical environment, but is stimulated by traditional beliefs in people’s mind. The words appearing in the couplets express the meanings of *fu* (福 luck and happiness), *cai* (财 monetary and wealth), and *lu* (禄 prospect and official rank). They are traditional ideas expressed with these formulized words, but they are also modern wishes. For example, I recorded some words from the couplets on the site. “一年好运随春到，四季财源顺意来。” (A whole year of luck comes with the Spring Festival; the four season’s wealth comes with our wish.) “贺佳节富贵平安，迎新春吉祥如意。” (Celebrate good holiday to pray for wealth and safety; Welcome the New Year to wish good luck
and wellness.) These expressions illustrate that if an old, traditional expression can meet with contemporary desire; it is able to be absorbed into modern culture and continue.

**The Temple Fair Visitors**

During the session of the Spring Festival and the Dule Temple Fair, traditional art and craft vendors gathered on the ancient Wuding Street, selling items such as finger painting, candy dolls, dough dolls, and so on. Craftsmen simply laid out their tools and products on the ground or on a cart, making crafts and selling them on the site. Some of them came from other townships in the county, or even other regions, and joined the fair to sell products called *gan miao hui*. They were arranged by the Temple Fair administration and had to pay a fee of 100 RMB for participating the fair. When the fair was over, they had to leave from the site, otherwise they would be expelled by local administrative officers.

Figure 5.2  A craftsman making dough figure crafts at the Dule Temple Fair. Photo by author, 2011.

A craftsman who was making traditional dough figures (*mian ren*) told me that he was not a Jixian resident. He was from Dezhou in Shangdong province. He came here for this temple fair. When this fair finished, he and his wife would go to other fairs in other areas. For the
figures made of dough (mian ren), some were from traditional repertories, such as figures from the story of *The West Wanderings*, monkey King Sun Wukong, pig Zhu Bajie, and the zodiac Rabbit. Besides traditional figures, he also made some from contemporary popular Japanese cartoons, such as an Ottoman and Chinese domestic kid TV cartoon figure Xi Yangyang.

Besides traditional cultural shows, to satisfy multiple demographics of temple fair visitors, especially the youth, the fair organizers also set up modern games and electronic entertainment programs on the Temple Fair site, such as bumper cars and a shooting gallery, and maze game. In addition, the stores on Wuding Street next to the Dule Temple stayed open during the temple fair session but sold various modern goods to the Temple Fair visitors. Thus, a seasonal traditional fair held in the ancient part of Jixian actually blended traditional scenery and modern scenery, and visitors consume both traditional and modern cultural products, either old or new.

The visitors at the Temple Fair hold multiple identities and purposes. Some visitors were devout Buddhists. They wore the Buddhist’s uniform of Jushi clothes. They burn incense sticks and bent knees to worship Buddha and Bodhisattva Guanyin. For the ritual events, they gathered in the hall and followed monks chanting scriptures. They were traditional Buddhists. Some visitors were ordinary people, but they believed that Guanyin could protect them and their family if they worshiped and made a sacrifice. They also worshiped with bended knees in front of the Guanyin statue and the incense burners. Among them, there were a group people who were not devout Buddhists but modern businessmen. They came to the temple to pray for their business. These people wore fashionable clothes. They generously spent money on incense and burned it to make wishes. The Dule Temple administration set up a counter in the courtyard to sell incense from as low as 80 RMB, but prices got much higher. The temple administration did not
allow people to bring in any incense from outside. Worshipers must buy incense in the Temple. I asked the reason. The excuse is to prevent the wooden temple from fire accident.¹

![Figure 5.3 Worship at the Guanyin Pavilion. Photo by author, 2011.](image)

In addition to these worshipers, people visited the ancient streets for various intentions: Some for watching performances; some for satisfying their nostalgia; some for just wandering streets and tasting a snack. At the fair, I interviewed some visitors and learned their particular purposes and situations for attending. Below are some cases from my field notes.

Visitor 1: a Jixian native family from a town 50 km away. They had visited the place more than ten years ago. This time they just took their kids to have fun at the fair.

Visitor 2: a woman from a village. She got entrance admission from someone, so just came for a fun time with her kids.

Visitor 3: from Beijing, who found information about the fair online and came to see the ancient architecture and traditional customs.

Visitor 4: a seventy-year-old woman, a Buddhist, from Yanjiao, Beijing. She came to the temple fair to worship Buddha. She told me that in the Buddhist system of belief, a kind mind could get a kind return.
Visitor 5: a seventy-three years old woman. She is a Tangshan native. After the Tangshan earthquake, she moved to Jixian. She was not a Buddhist, but she liked to watch *huahui* (folk dance play) performances. While she talked with me, the *huahui* performance had not started yet, so she waited there. At 1:30 p.m., a team of dancers started to perform the Yangge dance; however, the elderly woman said she liked role-play dancing, not just simple dancing, so she left.

Visitor 6: a family of four, a middle-aged husband and wife, a five-year-old son and his grandfather. They drove their own car from Tianjin city. I asked them: “Why did you choose to come to this temple fair?” They answered me: “To worship Buddha. We come here every year for the Spring Festival because we felt it was efficacious to worship here. Actually, we don’t know much about Buddhism.” I asked them: “Did you see any changes to the temple through years?” They responded to me: “Incense price is up. Last year it was thirty Yuan for one package, now it is eighty Yuan for one package. We bought three packages with 240 Yuan.”

Visitor 7: an old man with his wife, daughter, and grandson who came from Beijing. This is the first time he had visited Jixian, the Dule Temple, and the Temple fair. He said he came to visit here because this temple is famous, and he read about the temple from books before. He knew of Liang Sicheng’s research about the Dule temple. When I asked him why the stone lions standing on the side of Guanyin pavilion looked different, he pointed at the one that was damaged with a dissimilar face saying that this one might be the Yuan dynasty work. Although they are all stone lions, after a long time, the images might have changed. He also pointed at some tomb stones laid on the ground of the eastside yard and said to me that these tombstones were also from different times, the Yuan dynasty, the Jin dynasty, the Qing dynasty, and the Republic period. From talking with him, I felt he was knowledgeable about history and archeology, and he came to visit the Dule Temple as a cultural pilgrimage.
Visitor 8: a middle age woman who was holding a few bundles of joss sticks and waiting for someone when I approached to her. She told me she was a native of Jixian and comes here to sacrifice incense every year during the spring festival session. She was not interested in any other activities at the fair, even the dancing and acrobatic performances.

Figure 5.4 Visitors in the Dule Temple during the Spring Festival. Photo by author, 2011.

Visitor 9: the elder Sun, was seventy-eight years old, who came to the temple fair alone. He told me he was from Bangjun Township and lived in his son’s home in Jixian at that time. In his childhood, he visited the Dule temple once. It was free to enter the temple and also to attend many huahui performances in town for many days. Now these activities have become rare. People stayed home watching TV and playing Majiang (mah-jongg 麻将). Since his son got a ticket for him, he could come to recall his childhood experience at the temple fair and watch huahui performances. When I asked him if he liked the acrobatic performance, he said he already watched for a while, but this kind performance could be seen on TV, so he would rather to watch other things here.

The above visitors could represent the complexity of numerous visitors during the temple fair session in the Dule Temple. Generally speaking, on this occasion, the traditional themes of
praying for fortune, wealth and peace, and for a happy trade and gathering, the constructed traditional world, actually mingles with the modern world. Elderly people set themselves in the current atmosphere to recall and re-experience the past; whereas younger people came to explore this strange and imagined world, to extend their own experience from the present world to the past world. Thus, the temple fair is a place where we see the clash of old world experiences and modern world experiences. Tradition presented here is a reproduction through the interaction of old and new. From this point of view, no matter what background visitors have, their experience on this occasion was conducted through two connected, combined, and contrasted cultural worlds: the traditional world and the modern world. Through repackaging their own experience in the current context, they fulfill their own desires at the present moment. We may interpret this phenomenon as a kind of “flexibility of culture,” where those people involved can “break free their initial contexts and successively recontextualized in new cultural settings,” as Jason Jackson writes in his study of Yuchi people incorporating the ritual use of the peyote cactus into the fabric of their tribal culture and society (Jackson 2004: 186, 203).

In 2011, the Dule Temple Fair ended on the seventh day of the lunar Chinese New Year. Jixian’s local offices, stores, companies returned to their normal hours, but many villagers from surround areas still came to town for shopping and having a fun. The playground site on Wuding Street was still open because local schools were still on winter vacation. Off Wen Chang Street there was a south-north side street called “Jixian Cultural Street.” It is actually a snack (little eats) street. From lunar calendar January 1 to January 5, the vendors who yearly run their small business on the street all went back home to enjoy a few days off with their families. At this moment for them, spending a traditional holiday seemed more important than earning money. From lunar January 6, I saw these vendors gradually came back again and set up food booths or
tables along Jixian Cultural Street. Another annual food area was on Wuding Street near Dule Temple. Local snacks yecai hezi, mao jidan, wan tuo, nian gao, America New Orleans toast chicken, Sichuan spicy hot pot ma la tang chuan shao (麻辣烫串烧), Hunan zha chou dou fu (炸臭豆腐), fried tasty bean curd—all kinds of snacks from local, domestic, and even foreign areas could be found here and were enjoyed by both old and young people, visitors and locals.

**Celebrating Western Valentine’s Day in Jixian Town**

While local people were still celebrating the traditional Chinese New Year, the western holiday Valentine’s Day coincided with the Lunar January 12, the solar calendar date February 14, so it was interesting to observe how this western holiday culture was imported, localized, and celebrated in this old town, a traditional Chinese style environment.

![Valentine's Day celebration](image)

Figure 5.5 Youth and Roses celebration on the Valentine’s Day in ancient town. Photo by author, 2011.

Valentine’s Day is called in Chinese as Qing ren jie (情人节 Lover’s Day). It was imported from the West along with the opening of China, and it has become a new fashion for young people to celebrate this western holiday. In Drum Tower Square, on the day, there were many young people, from teen to thirty, wandering in the Square to sell or buy roses and chocolate candies. They seemed to be taking it as a kind of fashionable activity. I saw a colorful
post hung in front of a rose table on the street explaining the meanings of the amount of roses in an interesting Chinese way: “一枝代表一心一意；两枝代表两个人的世界你和我；三枝代表三生三世相爱；四枝代表至死不渝；五枝代表无怨无悔；九枝代表地久天长；十枝代表十全十美 (One rose means wholehearted love; two roses mean you and I love each other; three roses mean love through the three periods of life: before birth, being in this world, and after death; four roses means an unchangeable love, even after death; five roses mean no regret for love; nine roses mean an eternal love; ten roses mean a perfect love).”

In this Chinese interpretation, the western Valentine’s Day was localized. In the western world, such as in the United States, as I have observed, this holiday is not limited to young lovers; it expresses a kind of universal love among human beings. Thus, in elementary schools in the United States, Valentine’s Day is commonly celebrated in classrooms. In contrast, in this Chinese context, it takes Valentine’s Day’s narrow meaning: wholehearted and eternal romantic love and marriage. In this interpretation, it technically uses the traditional Chinese rhetoric of “homonym and pun” to link numbers to specific meanings for love expression and to select familiar Chinese idioms to interpret the meaning of this holiday that stresses love and marriage as a lifelong matter. For instance, number 4 (si) is a homophone for the word 死 (si, death); number 5 (wu) sounds the same as the word 无 (wu, nothing); number 9 (jiu) sounds the same as the word 久 (jiu, forever); number 10 (shi) means full. Nowadays in the context of Jixian and even in China, although traditional morals have declined greatly, and the feudalist moral practices of chaste women and widow-hood honor no longer have a place in modern world, this kind of expression, recontextualized in a local setting, reveals another kind of concern to the fragile love and marriage situation in contemporary Chinese society, and reflects people’s
longing for virginity and single-minded love and marriage which are somewhat missed in
modern world.

**The Lantern Festival and the Huahui Assembly**

The Chinese New Year Spring Festival normally ends on the 15\textsuperscript{th} day of the first lunar month, a holiday called the *Yuanxiao* festival or the Lantern Festival. This traditional holiday is still celebrated by every household, but with new features in making holiday food *yuanxiao* (sticky rice balls) and playing lanterns. In the past, people made sticky rice balls at home. Nowadays a major scene for this traditional holiday is large-scale and noisy selling and buying of sticky rice balls in grocery stores and on the streets. In the largest supermarket, Jiale, in Jixian, a crowd of people surrounded the *Yuanxiao* counters to select different kinds of sticky rice balls. A machine was running on the site to show customers how sticky rice balls were made, and some big colorful posters were hung on the board outside the store. All this scenery composed a holiday atmosphere. Here the commercial activities obviously are a part of the holiday celebration and provide a display for this tradition in a modern setting in a modern way. To celebrate the Lantern Festival, while traditional paper lanterns decorated the streets or household gates, young people like to play with an updated lantern *Kongming deng* (孔明灯) in the Drum Tower Square. The *Kongming* Lantern, also called sky light, is said originated in the *Sanguo* period (220-280) for military purposes. Nowadays made with the same physics principle as the hot balloon, people light it and then sent it to the sky to pray for happiness. This evidence demonstrates how new technologies have been applied to renovate the old tradition.

From the ancient times in China, playing firecrackers has always been a most important celebration activity during the Chinese New Year (*Chunjie*). A story is told that the New Year celebration custom originates from people using firecrackers to expel a fierce beast called *Nian*
(year). Now many large cities in China carry out a policy prohibiting playing firecrackers for the sake of safety and pollution concerns. But in small cities and rural areas, people still continue this traditional way to celebrate the Chinese New Year. Some modern pattern fireworks have also been popularly used for this traditional celebration. While I was in Jixian, from the Chinese New Year’s Eve to the Yuanxiao festival, the sound of firecrackers and fireworks had been continuous. Especially on midnight of New Year’s Eve, on Song Nian day (See the New Year off on the fifth day), and the Yuanxiao Festival night (the fifteen days), lighting firecrackers and fireworks went with the climax. In the evenings from six to ten, loud noises were heard throughout the town. This kind of activity was held by individual households, business units, and shops. Traditionally, people believe that firecrackers can expel evil. Today this old belief seems to remain in the mind of contemporary people. Since the household incomes are commonly increased in these years, regardless of the costly price for fireworks, people still spent a lot of money to practice this old belief, and even do so to show their rich status. The most popular place for watching fireworks is in the Drum Tower Square. After dinner, many local people gather there to enjoy splendid fireworks and Kongming lanterns sparkling in the dark sky.

Figure 5.6 Watching the Kongming Lantern at the Drum Tower Square. Photo by author, 2011.
In Jixian town, I encountered another big traditional event for the New Year celebration. It was the Jixian county *huahui* gathering show held on the day of the *Yuanxiao* Festival. *Huahui* is the favorite traditional entertaining activity for both local townspeople and villagers in Jixian. The *huahui* gathering was organized by the Jixian Cultural Bureau and the Jixian Tourism Bureau. *Huahui* is a traditional local dance performance. It combines traditional music, *yangge* dance, and drama. *Yangge* is a kind of popular folk dance in Northern China. In the formal, local *huahui* performance, performers wear colorful old style costumes according to the roles they play along with and make-up to paint their faces. Whenever the *huahui* team appears, with the lively musical sound and colorful costume, it makes a joyful atmosphere. During winters past, since there were not many entertainment activities in villages and no farming work in the fields, peasants usually gathered together to perform dances and dramas, to entertain the deities and themselves. Thus, in the villages in Jixian, a common outdoor activity was the *huahui* dance. During the Chinese New Year, the *huahui* teams came to town for public performances. Local people from surrounded townships and villages also gathered in town to watch *huahui* performances. It was called *gan huahui* (赶花会). There is a record for old *huahui* activity in the Jixian gazetteer *Min Guo Jixian Zhi*: “In the past peaceful times, the local had the custom of playing ‘Nuo’ and held *huahui* competitions.² The old custom still exists. There were also activities of greeting deities, performing dramas, hanging lanterns and playing puppet shows (昔承平之际习傩赛会，存古遗风，迎神演剧，张灯演影).” (Qiu 1944: 104).

Nowadays, during the seven days of the Dule Temple Fair, the organizers arrange *huahui*-performing teams that are selected from Jixian townships or villages to enter the Dule Temple to perform for tourists and local visitors. The purpose is to show outside tourists about the Jixian local New Year traditions and to enhance the joyful holiday atmosphere. For the local
government, to organize a big assemblage of huahui performance in town in the Yuanxiao Festival is to bring the old custom back, to recover the local cultural tradition, to make a differentiated cultural landscape from current social scenery, and to provide local people with a cultural entertaining program. These are the organizers’ purposes. The performers have their own purposes.

From my interviews and observations on the site, I learned about people’s intentions for playing huahui. One purpose continues the traditional function of entertainment. Most of huahui performers were middle aged or older. A woman in the huahui team from Qianlou village from the Bieshan Township told me that they were not interested in playing Ma Jiang (Mah-jongg) or watching TV at home, both popular entertainment in China, but also there were not many other entertainments in her village. Their children already grew up, so they chose to join the huahui team. Her husband supported her and even used his own truck to send the village huahui team to town for the show. Thus, despite a prevalence of electronic entertainment nowadays, traditional huahui has its own value. Another purpose for performing huahui could be considered a new one in modern world: It is exercise. In modern world, machines have replaced many human physical activities. Therefore, people have to find new ways of doing physical activity and keeping a healthy body. The traditional huahui dance becomes one of many popular physical exercise dances in local practice and gains its new social functions.

One of my informants of huahui dance is a sixty-four-year-old woman, Liu Suyun. She did not belong to any huahui teams. She was a cook in the kitchen of the Dule Temple, but she liked huahui dance very much. When a huahui team played inside the Dule temple, she often voluntarily participated in the performance. She liked to play the role of Er nainai, who used to act as a female matchmaker in the past. She can spontaneously sing some arias when she joined
in a performance. She told me that she had rheumatism in the past. Since she practiced the
huahui dance, her whole body has healed. She no longer suffers from rheumatism. She has been
practicing this activity for over twenty years.

The huahui show I observed on the day of the Yuanxiao Festival in 2011 included twelve
huahui performance teams. The performers all wore colorful costumes and gathered at the Drum
Tower Square at 2 pm. The crowed audience surrounded them, so they did not have enough
space to dance freely. Jixian government leaders stood on the pavilion of the Drum Tower to
watch the show. After dancing for a while, the huahui teams divided into four groups marching
and dancing along the streets in different directions. When they approached a commercial unit or
a local institution such as a bank, a store, or a government agency, they stopped there and
negotiated with the owner for a paid performance.

Figure 5.7 Street huahui performance during the Lantern Festival in Jixian town. Photo by author, 2011.

Normally if huahui performers are made up with face painting and dressed in costume,
they expect to earn a bit of money for a performance. A huahui team could get paid from 200 to
500 RMB ($30-$80) for each show. After deducting expenses, the rest amounts were divided
among the team members. Although they do not earned much, the team members still enjoyed
their performance. If they do not wear makeup, they just entertain themselves or voluntarily put on a show for others and do not expect to receive money. In most cases, they were given payment because in the holiday season, both parties would like to have a joyful New Year experience.

However, I encountered an unpleasant case between a huahui team and the Jixian County School Board. This team was from Zhaoge Zhuang village in Mashenqiao Township. They stayed in front of the entrance of the Jixian School Board and wanted to put on a paid performance. The board guards closed the gate and nobody came out to talk with the huahui team. A woman in the team complained: “We came here to pay a New Year call, but such a large department even doesn’t want to spend as little as 200 Yuan. Shame!” People around agreed with her. A drummer on the team wanted to take the drum into the yard, but was stopped by the guard. For almost half an hour, neither party was willing to compromise. Finally, the huahui team leader said, “We just enjoy ourselves, and also so many people around here want to see. Let us dance!” Then they danced on the sidewalk, accompanied by the sound of gongs and drums. While they were dancing, a black car drove out from the yard. The huahui team had to stop dancing to let the car pass through. Such a conflict reflects an existing feeling of antagonism in the society toward commercialized cultural practices. However, which party was wrong? Is it reasonable for the huahui performing team to receive a reward for their traditional dance performance? Should cultural activities be conducted outside the economic circle? In fact, the celebration activities during the traditional holidays, like the splendid fireworks, lighting of Kongming lantern, and machine-made sticky rice balls, nothing could be away from a commercial engagement. Culture and economy are bundled together in the real world of modern environments. Some people adopt negative attitude toward the phenomenon of cultural
commercialization. However, fairly saying, we have to accept this social reality. Cultural traditions are continuing with inevitable modern updates while maintaining the core nature for supporting people’s life.

**Daily Cultural Life in Jixian Town**

Arranged Chinese New Year celebration activities are more like a seasonal stage. When the session is over, those sessional performances and displays were also gone. The ancient streets around the Drum Tower returned to normal status and were overwhelmed with modern merchandises and shoppers.

In Jixian town, the ancient style buildings in the ancient town area were administrated by the Commercial Administrative Department from the Jixian government. They leased the buildings to private businesses. Businessmen used the properties to run clothing stores, electronic stores, restaurants, and other shops. By my count, along Wuding street, the north side had around sixty stores and the south side had around forty-two stores. Among them there were only eleven stores selling Buddhist religious articles that might fit to the traditional cultural theme of the street. In contrast, modern business and consumption were conducted on a large scale in the ancient town. Many foreign and nation-wide merchandise chains opened stores here. The American fast food restaurants Kentucky Fry Chicken (肯德基), McDonald (麦当劳), and California Beef Noodles (加州牛肉面) were among these shops. They sparkled at the intersection corners of the ancient streets and the Drum Tower Square, and became the most popular and noisy places in the ancient town area. The Jizhou Theater was located at the eastside of Drum Tower Square with a fine ancient pavilion appearance, but large foreign and domestic movie posters were erected in front of the theater, and foreign dances were also performed there.
In this sense, the normal day situation of the ancient town is rather a modern shopping and entertainment center. The ancient-style buildings look like a kind of old costume decorating the town square. However, in this real world rather than an arranged world occurring in a special holiday session, I found that the real tradition was not gone with those mobile folk craft vendors and masked huahui performance teams. Local traditions have coexisted with or integrated with modern culture and foreign culture, and have been consumed and expressed in every aspect of local people’s daily life, from eating, living, playing, and shopping to commuting in the contemporary social context.

Since the Drum Tower Square was constructed in 2004, it has been a significant spot in town for locals and tourists. Jixian’s government office buildings and the First High School of Jixian were less than one hundred meters from the north of the Drum Tower. The ancient Confucian Temple and Luban Temple were next to them to the north. To the south and east of the Drum Tower, there were numerous stores and restaurants. The underground of the Drum Tower Square had been used for the supermarket Gu Lou guang chang di xia shang cheng (古楼广场地下商城). Therefore, the Drum Tower area could be seen as a political, economic, and
cultural center of Jixian. For this reason, I moved to a new place in a residential alley (*hu tong*) just behind the Drum Tower. This relocation allowed me to have more opportunities to observe Jixian’s vernacular daily life and cultural practices.

**A Family’s Life from Village to Town**

My landlord was a family that migrated from the rural village Jiubaihu of Xilonghuyu Township to Jixian town since they had relatives living in town. They bought the house located at the central town with a courtyard. They occupied the main houseroom and rented out other rooms. The hostess, Ms. Zhang, had two sisters who worked in Jixian town and a brother who still lived in their hometown village. Zhang’s husband, Mr. Jiang, drove a *San beng zi* in town, a small convenient three wheels transportation, to earn money from either tourists or locals. Their single child, a daughter, was attending a boarding school, Jixian Second High School, far away from their home. The reason is that although they lived just next to the Jixian First High School, which was the main high school in Jixian, the school required a higher score for entry. Their daughter did not achieve the required entry score, so she had to select a normal high school in town to attend. Zhang’s parents also lived with them. This family unit could represent common Chinese families nowadays that are experiencing the transformation of their identity from rural peasants to city resident in the course of urban and rural modernization process in China.

In Ms. Zhang’s family routine life, they still kept some of the traditional lifestyle and customs. For instance, the family’s sisters and brothers-in-law often gathered in the evening to chat and eat dinners together, to greet their parents daily. Zhang’s mother had been sick for many years and lay paralyzed in bed. The father told me that he had taken care of his wife for eighteen years. One morning, the mother was dying due to her illness. In such an emergency situation, the family members’ first response was to call an ambulance to send her to the Jixian hospital.
However, shortly, when the ambulance arrived, they changed their decision. They still paid a fee 50 Yuan to the ambulance to let it go, and then they soon arranged another transportation to send their mother back to her old hometown in the village before she died. This decision came from a traditional idea in their mind. According to this old idea, people should die in their own home. Later I heard that Ms. Zhang’s mother died soon at night on the day they sent her back. All her children and grandchildren went back the home village to attend her funeral. After staying in their home village for several days, Ms. Zhang’s family members returned to their home in Jixian town. I was surprised to see that they did not wear any mourning clothes, normally white or black colors or any mourning ornaments such as a black hoop on an arm or white cloth shoes on their feet. They also did not put any mourning signs on the entrance gate or the room doors of their home. However, according to the traditional Chinese way described in the old local gazetteers, if a parent died, the offspring should wear mourning clothes or ornaments. Even since the middle of the twenty century, the PRC has suggested practicing new simple mourning and funeral customs, it was still a common practice for the mourning family to wear or decorate with some mourning signs for forty-nine days after a death. This evidence told me that while this family still followed some traditional ways from previous generations, they have also given up some old traditional customs and just handled things they feel comfortable doing in current social settings and for convenience of running their house rental business. It also told me of radical changes of contemporary moral and custom practices. Tradition is in continuity and also in change.

During my staying in Jixian town, I also witnessed other funerals that combined traditional ways and modern elements. For example, the deceased family wore mourning clothes and rode cars or trucks to the burial site. A mourning band played common funeral music on the
truck, and traditional paper monies were given out along the roads that the funeral team passed. The funeral items brought to the burial site for the deceased person included not only the traditional wreath and paper money, but also the paper house, paper TV and so on. On one occasion, I saw that as soon as the funeral was over, two women took off their mourning clothes on the way out. During lunar July 15, the traditional Ghost Festival zhong yuan jie, there were still people in town burning paper monies on the sidewalk of the street for the dead people.

Thus, traditional ways and modern ways coexisted in contemporary people’s daily life. For Ms. Zhang’s family, their identities and ideologies are also in an ambiguous zone in the transition from village to town, from peasants to city residents. Zhang’s father was about seventy and was still healthy. He told me that since his home village was nearby Cuiping Lake, a local tourism spot, the land of his village recently was purchased by investors for developing tourism. All villagers had to move to assigned apartment buildings and had to re-arrange their lives. Without the land they used to rely on, they had to find a job or do something to support their family lives. In his talking, he looked like quite confused. Although he lived in his daughter’s home in Jixian town, he still worried about his village buddies. There was little entertainment things for him to do during the evenings, so after dinner he often went to the Drum Tower Square to enjoy some public entertainment activities there.

Public Entertainment in the Drum Tower Square

The ancient relic Drum Tower in town was not only still the physically center of town as it was in its ancient times, it also spiritually gathered the people in town to stay near it. People normally gathered around the Drum Tower in two places. One was in the big square in front of the Drum Tower. Another one was around the Drum Tower. The activities held in these places mixed traditional and modern programs and composed an active contemporary cultural
landscape in Jixian town. In a small park behind the Drum Tower, people liked to gather after dinner to perform the local favorite drama Pingju (评剧).

Figure 5.9 People gathering at the Drum Tower in the evening. Photo by author, 2011.

Pingju is a traditional regional drama with a featured tune and is very popular in the Hebei area. It combines story, role-play, dialogue, song, and music. The tune is graceful, gentle, and suitable for a type of love and family story. The repertoire includes both ancient stories and modern stories. Although Jixian is not the only owner of Pingju, Jixian has performed this folk drama since the Republic era, which locally was called beng beng xi, and it has been transmitted to a third generation so far. In the Republic period, a Sun Qing couple and a Hei San couple were popular locally in playing Pingju. In contemporary times, Pingju is still a favorite drama for locals, and Jixian also produces nationally famous Pingju troupes and actors. Jixian native Yi Chunying is a national first class Pingju actress and earned the title of “Peasants’ Artist.” The Jixian Pingju troupe holds more than three hundred shows annually in local rural villages, townships, and other regions in China, even overseas in Japan and Australia. It was named by the National Cultural Ministry of China as “the outstanding work unit in cultural services to peasants and communities” (Jin 2006: 296). This troupe has been one of the few successful regional
traditional drama troupes in the nation to survive in the contemporary social circumstances in which Chinese economy has transitioned from the planned economic system to the market economic system, and Western popular cultures have been overwhelming the whole nation.

Encouraging with such a prestige honor earned by local group, from Jixian’ government, cultural sections, media and local ordinary people all showed their enthusiasm for Pingju art. The most recent news is that Pingju has been approved by the Jixian government to enlist as one of Jixian’s Intangible Cultural Heritages. In my visiting several public parks in Jixian town, besides at the Drum Tower, there were also groups of people voluntarily and regularly gathered in Sanba Park and Dizhi Park near Fujun Mount to practice singing Pingju melodies. Most of them are middle-aged or elders. They did not wear costumes or make up. Normally there was a traditional music instrument ensemble accompanying the singers. The band commonly included instruments such as gong, drum, erhu, and suona. The erhu is the most popular Chinese instrument closely related two stringed fiddles and the suona (double-reeded horn) is the premier Chinese horn. Players were all amateur musicians, but they were skillful because they could accommodate any singer/s request. The activities were fully self-organized and self-entertained. The audience was

Figure 5.10 Yi Chunying (left) in a Pingju show held at the Dizhi Park. Photo by author, 2011.
either themselves or the park visitors. I talked with a group of women on a Saturday afternoon in Sanba Park. I asked them how and why they learned *Pingju*. A sixty-seven-year-old woman told me that they just liked *Pingju*, so they grouped together to play it. This is also a social communication platform for them. They used an MP3 player to download some famous melodies from repertoires of *Pingju*, such as the ancient play *Qin Xianglian* and the modern play *Liu Qiaoer*, and then followed the recordings to practice. They found scripts on the Internet, saved them on a computer, and then memorized them. When they sang, they did not need to look up any notes. I asked her if they also sang *Pingju* at the Drum Tower, and the old woman stated that she was the organizer of the earliest *Pingju* activity in the Drum Tower. It was from ten years ago.

In my observation on the site of the Drum Tower, I saw that not only traditional *Pingju* art, but also fans of popular songs gathered there regularly. The situation on the site of the Drum tower was that people often made up three circles around the Drum Tower. One group of people congregated at the eastside of the Drum Tower, in front of the building of the Jixian bookstore. They often played popular songs from movies or MTV, and the singers mainly were young people. Another group of people gathered at the front corner of the Drum Tower. They often played nostalgic songs from the twentieth century, songs from the period of the Cultural Revolution such as the songs in the eight modern revolution sample operas. The third group of people was the *Pingju* fans who performed behind the Drum Tower. The size of the audience was probably more than a hundred people. Thus, the three group circles represent multiple cultures in town practiced by local people from traditional culture to popular culture.

Besides the singing groups around the Drum Tower, there were also some large-sized cultural activities held in the Drum Tower Square daily. Activities were organized either by local
government or by the public. These events include traditional cultural performance events such as huahui performances, gongfu shows, Pingju or Peking operas, and political cultural events. For instance, on July 1, the Jixian government sponsored a concert to celebrate the birthday of the Chinese Communist Party, and on October 1 a show was also held for celebrating National Day. The songs performed on these occasions strike on the theme of nationalism. The programs were directed by the Jixian Cultural Bureau and Jixian People’s Cultural House. They planned programs, set up sound equipment and cleaned up the square before the events were undertaken. The performers were assigned and the show programs were also selected by them. Actors dressed in costumes. Except for the government sponsored cultural activities in the Square, regular daily cultural activities, such as the Square Dances, were voluntarily organized by local people.

The square dance is a very prevalent phenomenon in contemporary China. Along with the improvement of city facilities and quality of life of Chinese people in the course of modernization, in the 1990s, almost every city and town constructed a large public activity square to satisfy people’s demand for socializing, entertainment, and exercising. The physical dance has become the most popular dance form played in squares and accessible for everyone; city residents and middle-age women are especially keen on it. The composite dance incorporates dance, music, and exercise and mixes the folk dance yangge with modern dance and western disco. The folk dance yangge was simplified from the 1940s in the new yangge movement and was easy to learn for everyone, so it has widely spread and continues to this day. The elementary dancing steps are three quick steps forward, one-step backward, a pause, and repeat. Disco was introduced to China in the 1980s after China opened its doors to the West, and it was quickly accepted by Chinese youth. In Jixian, the square exercise dance in the Drum
Tower was held every evening. Over hundred people participated in dancing. A model dancer lead in the front and other dancers followed the model and the dancing music.

![Daily dancing activities at the Drum Tower Square](image)

**Figure 5.11** Daily dancing activities at the Drum Tower Square. Photo by author, 2011.

Besides the physical exercise dance, another active dance group practiced Western Social Dance in the Drum Tower Square. In most cases, one man and one woman were dancing partners, but sometimes two women also danced together. In traditional Chinese society, moral strictures forbade men and women from touching each other unless they are a couple. Thus, when Western social dance spread to China in the 1920s, it was seen as a social sign of China’s modernity. However, this type of dance was forbidden again during the Cultural Revolution. After China opened its doors to the West in the reform era, Western social dance fever quickly occurred nationwide, and it symbolized a kind of Western culture. The Western social dance players were mainly young people and middle-age couples. They were well dressed in the modern style. While they enjoyed dancing, they tried to make graceful gestures to show off to viewers.

This glance shows the daily activities taking place in the Drum Tower Square—old and new, east and west, traditional and modern—playing together in this newly constructed ancient-
style modern square. These activities compose a real, contemporary cultural and social scene. If one thinks that this scene is not an authentic, vernacular, local culture, what should local cultures look like? Who creates local culture and practices local culture? In these conditions, local people have been playing and creating a mingled culture and practicing it in their daily life. We may say this is contemporary authentic local culture. Another dancing scene also warrants discussion.

An interesting phenomenon in Jixian town is that local daily traditional dance was not performed in this ancient-style square but in the modern setting of Xinghua Street, which was near the Xinghua Farmer’s Market. On the east side of town, every evening around 7:30, a gong and drum blared out. As if on command, shortly, yangge fans, men and women, gathered and started to dance traditional yangge along the sidewalk on the Xinghua Street. Unlike traditional huahui performers showing up in the festival season, many street yangge dancers did not wear costumes or make up their faces. They seemed not interested in differentiating themselves from the rest of the world, marking the dance as a performance, or providing a kind of visual and audio pleasure to audience. Rather, they just used this kind of traditional dance to make a joyful world for themselves, to relax from daytime stress, and to excise their bodies. The participants are either Jixian town residents or local peasants. They held a large colorful fan in their hands as a dancing prop. When they were dancing, everyone’s face looked peaceful and joyful. One man wore a yellow gown and a woman’s hair net to take on the role of Er nainai. He told me he rode his motorbike here from 10 kilometers away, but he really enjoyed dancing yangge. A very short and thin man wore an out-of-date dark green cap and clothes and always put an unlit cigarette in his month while simply following the dance movement. He was a trash collector at the Xinghua Farmer’s market when I saw him there. No matter how poor and how low his social status in the daytime society, he enjoyed the evening yangge dance and looked carefree and leisurely. A
traditional Chinese ensemble with six players playing instruments including the gong, drum, muyu, sheng, and suona loyally accompanied these yangge dance fans every evening. The music they played was the most popular Chinese traditional yangge music. I talked with these amateur musicians and learned that they trained themselves to play these instruments. Playing music here every day was totally voluntary, for fun. Thus, the dance tradition just has been simply continuing within ordinary people’s simple life activities.

Daily life for locals not only provides entertainment, but also gives them a venue for getting goods, food, and transportation. While modern buildings, facilities, and supermarkets have crowded into town, several thousand years of agriculture traditions have not totally disappeared. Instead, they have been transformed into a local modern life that serves local people and enriches their daily life while provide tourists with unique experiences. From my observation, at least, the things I described in the following passages show a strong connection to the local old agricultural tradition.

**Gan Ji (赶集): A Traditional Way of Shopping**

The farmer’s market fair is an old local tradition recorded in local gazetteers I cited previously. This tradition has continued. It is called *gan ji* (赶集). The regular fair dates in Jixian town occur on 1st, 6th, 11th, 16th, 21st, and 26th of the lunar month. When I stayed in Jixian in 2011, the farm fair was actually not held in the Xinghua farmer’s market (兴华市场), but at another site called the Zhang Zhuang Farmer’s Trade Market (张庄农贸市场). The difference between the two farmer’s markets is that the Xinghua farmer’s market runs every day and has a stable set of vendors there to engage in daily selling activities. The local commercial administrative department built basic facilities on the site with a big indoor warehouse, small storerooms, and sheds. Vendors annually rented a space inside warehouse or in an open-air
market place and supplied food, fruit, local specialties, as well other household goods. Sellers are retailers, not producers. The market was relatively quiet. The Zhang Zhuang Farmer’s Trade Market only runs on the specific fair dates and for a specific time period. It retains more traditional farm fair features. There is a big open-air ground for trading goods. The market space is arranged with different kinds of goods in different sections. There is a fruit section, a vegetable section, a grain section, a meat section, an eating table section, and so on. On these fair dates, local villagers bring their farm products in the market to sell. Shoppers include town residents, rural villagers, and tourists.

Nowadays many villagers no longer plant grain on their land or feed pigs at home. Instead, they use rented land to plant some local farm products according to the environment’s capacity and market demand. In Jixian, the northern mountain farmers commonly plant walnut trees, chestnut trees, jujube trees, pear trees, and persimmon trees. The southern plain farmers plant vegetables and do fishing. Some farm households do not plant anything. They run farmer’s guesthouses or conduct tourism services. They re-rent their land to other farmers in the village. In these situations, farmers have to use the money they earn to buy what they need in stores or at farmer’s markets. For town residents, although modern supermarkets like Jiale or Jingbailifa supply everything including food, meat, fruit, and vegetables, local residents still like to get fresh and cheap vegetables and fruits directly from local farmers. For tourists, besides viewing ancient relics in the town, to tour farmer’s markets and to purchase local farm products are also favorite activities for them. Before they leave town, they like to buy some special local food products such as walnuts, chestnuts, jujubes, persimmons, and local dry wild herbs from the farmer’s market either for themselves or for bringing home as gifts.
On the fixed fair dates, the farmer’s markets looked very crowded and noisy. Local farmers came to trade their own farm products. Many individual peddlers from other towns also came to sell household items such as clothes, shoes, and kitchenware. Thus, there were more temporary vendors and more buyers than on normal days in the farmer’s markets. I talked with a peddler who was selling cloth. He said he paid a fee for renting a space from the administration of the farmer’s market. Since fixed fair dates were different from town to town, this peddler was here this day, but on the next day would go to another fair. The goods in the market were normally not very fine products but cheap and useful for ordinary people’s daily needs. For instance, a two-meter-long cloth at the fair market was priced at thirteen RMB, but in a store, it would cost thirty RMB. For fruits and vegetables, the price here was about half as much as it would be in a store or from a street seller because farmers traded their own products. One could say that the goods at this kind of farmer’s market were mainly consumed by a lower income group of locals and outside tourists.

At the open-air trade site, the trade activity was still conducted in its traditional style. Many temporary vendors simply put unprocessed farm products on the ground or in baskets.
Some farmer sellers still used an old stick scale to weigh goods. The most common phenomenon to be seen in the market is bargaining between buyers and sellers. Normally, a price is negotiable during a purchasing process. A buyer could ask a better price from a seller and make a deal. The normal fair hours ran from 7:00 in the morning to noon. After 12:30 p.m., the noise market quickly diminished until it was as quiet as normal days. The farmers went back home with what products they had left, or went to stores in town to get things they could not find in the small grocery store in their village or township. It was just a block from the Zhang Zhuang Farmer’s Trade Market to the modern Jiale supermarket, but they respectively represent traditional and modern commercial activities and show their different social functions for local shopping activities. For shoppers, no matter if they operate in the old way or modern way, they choose where to go according to their own needs and lifestyle.

Local Snacks (Little Eats 小吃)

Local agricultural tradition is also reflected in street snack vending. Although in Jixian town there were many kinds of foreign restaurants, from American fried chicken to Korean noodles and domestic regional Chinese food restaurants, local traditional food ways still have a good consumer market that mainly can be found in street snack selling and family daily meals.

The most popular local snack (xiao chi, 小吃) in Jixian is the yecai hezi 野菜饸子. It is made of local wild herbs stuffed inside a round, flat corn flour wrapper and toasted in a large flat pan on a large, barrel-made stove. Both the recent local gazetteer Jixian Feng Wu Zhi and the Jixian Travel Bureau website introduced the local famous snack zi huo shao, which is kind of small bun. In the Qing dynasty it was sent as a tribute (贡品) to the imperial palace as fine dissert. Actually, I did not see the zi huo shao in the street of Jixian because it is not the kind of food that ordinary people eat. However, yecai hezi is not found in written materials, but seen in
local streets everywhere. When I was in Jixian, I liked to eat this instant snack. Food materials and food preparations were made on site. A long table and a few stools were set next to the stove. When yecai hezi was ready, people just sat down and ate there.

Figure 5.13 Local snacks yecai hezi and mao jidan. Photo by author, 2011.

The other local common snack is the mao jidan 毛鸡蛋, which is made by hatching eggs with the embryo and is toasted in a flat pan. When eaten, eaters add spicy seasons to it by themselves. The wan tuo 碗沱 is also a local traditional snack made with bean flour and curd. The street sellers commonly use a cart with wheels to hold all the cooking stuff. The upper level of the cart has a glass case, and inside there is a flat board for preparing food. The lower level has large containers to store food materials. Sellers use the flat board to cut curd into small pieces, put them in a bowl and add various sauces. The old pattern of this traditional snack, from preparation to consumption, still continues.

**San beng zi: Transportation in Town**

Nowadays modern vehicles like cars, trucks, mid-size vans, (面包车), and buses crowd in the street of Jixian town, but a popular local transportation called san beng zi (三蹦子), a kind of three wheel transportation, still competes with these modern conveyances. San beng zi looks like
a traditional three wheel carriage, but it is updated to use electricity or gas for power. The size of san ben zi is small, with one driver’s seat in the front and two seats in the back that can carry a maximum of four passengers. A movable case can be closed or opened according to the seasons and weather conditions. Local people and tourists both like to take a san beng zi to commute.

![Figure 5.14 A san beng zi passing through the ancient town. Photo by author, 2008.](image)

At the entrance gate of the ancient Wuding Street., I usually saw more san ben zi than taxies lining up there waiting for riders. Buying a san ben zi only costs several thousand Chinese Yuan, not a big amount to most households nowadays. Many drivers were peasants who immigrated from villages to town and took to this self-employed occupation to earn money. The fast growth of local tourism doubtless has brought in more customers and raised the demand for this kind of convenient transportation. Thus, this small transportation embraces both traditional and modern elements and supplies a convenient tool for people in town who claim different social identities, from emigrant peasant workers, to town residents, to urban tourists.
Conclusion

In sum, the evidence of contemporary cultural life in Jixian town shows that the mode of cultural life in the real world can hardly be constrained to a single category. Traditional culture, modern culture, local culture, domestic culture, and foreign culture have contested, integrated, and coexisted in either performed culture during special holidays or in local people’s daily life practices. The breakdown of boundaries in locals’ cultural practices is a social and cultural reality in contemporary society. Physical construction of old scenery, such as ancient style buildings, may only make a traditional facade, ancient building style, but it does not mean it can build a live culture separate from modern culture. Dissimilation of tradition is an undeniable social reality. Local cultural traditions are actually maintained and reconstructed by locals through their daily life practices according to their needs and desires in their particular social, economic, and cultural environment.
Chapter 6

Framing Tradition and Cultural Mixing: Rural Culture in the Interaction of Urban and Rural

One radical change caused by the “open and reform” policies in recent decades in China is the breakdown of the boundary between *cheng* (城 city) and *xiang* (乡 countryside) that comes with the increased mobility of the Chinese population. While the city modernization process led to a surge of peasants into cities and work at various construction sites, factories and home services, the urbanization of the countryside and the boom of rural tourism have also brought urban people and culture into the countryside. Thus, in Chinese history, an unprecedented interaction of rural culture and urban culture, tradition and modernity has come together in this modernization process and shaped a particular contemporary rural culture in the new era.

Tradition is modernized and modernity is traditionalized. Culture in contemporary China, via deconstruction and reconstruction, appears as a blend of multi-faceted productions driven by modern desires. Like the phenomena in entertainment, family life, farmer’s market, food ways, and transportation in Jixian town I have recounted above, cultural co-existence, exchange, integration, and renovation have become a significant tendency in the contemporary cultural landscape. To illustrate and interpret this cultural significance in Jixian, in this chapter, I will examine the situations of traditional rural culture, which have been under transformation and new development along with breaking down boundaries between rural and urban, tradition and modern, local and global in the course of rural tourism development.

Kneafsey remarks, “The countryside is increasingly viewed as both a commodity in itself and as a set of commodifiable signs and symbols which may be attached to particular places,
peoples, products and lifestyles.” Furthermore, “Through images and texts, attempts are made to attract tourists to rural areas through the promotion of representations of idealized, symbolic, cultural landscapes” (Kneafsey 2001: 762). Kneafsey, in his case study of Brittany, draws on Ray’s “culture economy” approach to rural development (Ray 1998) to study how a particular culture economy works can be achieved through the complex ways in which historically layered and newer social relations intersect within unique local territories. He explains that the newer social relations can include recent institutional and economic relationships with other places, the development of new types of entrepreneurial activity, the arrival of new inhabitants in rural areas, and the emergence of social trends such as green and heritage tourism (Kneafsey 2001:765). I draw on this view here because the rural tourism development in Jixian has constructed newer social relations in the reconstruction of local cultural economy.

As I recounted in the chapter 3, Jixian’s village tourism boomed in the early 2000s as a part of Jixian modernization plans for developing Jixian as a middle-class modern tourism city. The result produced from this social and economic strategy and action can be observed not only in economic profit, but also in rural culture reconstruction through rural and urban cultural connection and interaction in developing village tourism and the farmer’s guesthouse business. In this process, tourism business spurs villagers’ creativity. Villagers wisely use their environmental and cultural heritage resources to initiate local cultural products and to promote their tourism business. Conversely, modern tourism business and urban tourists have also impacted villagers’ lifestyle, cultural values, and ideologies. The interaction of rural culture and urban culture has reshaped rural cultural tradition and made tradition modern. From my field observation of the village tourism and farmer’s guesthouses in Jixian, I detect a complex blend of the historic relations and the newer social relations, the mingled culture formed of the old and the
new, the engaged cultural exchange of the rural and the urban. Here displayed rural cultural
spectacle is not under a certain stereotype but in its social reality.

Urban and Rural Encounters in the Mountain Village Dapingan

Since the early 2000s, the mountain village Dapingan, which only has 90 households and
300 people, has gradually been developed as a “Dapingan geng du wen hua sheng tai yuan” (大
平安耕读文化生态园 Dapingan Cultivating and Cultural Ecology Land). The transformation of
Dapingan village is a result of urban and rural collaboration.

Dapingan village is located nearby the Huangyaguan Great Wall in the north-west Jixian
County and has had over 2500 years of history. In the ancient times, the village had been an
army camp for defending against northern invaders. A legend is told that the Tianqi emperor in
the Ming dynasty inspected the village and gave it name Dapingan (大平安), which in Chinese
means a peace and comfort place. Today, an old stone castle, a well, and a horse barn from the
ancient times remain in the village. Dapingan is surrounded by mountains and rivers and has
mountain land totaling 2800 mu, a good natural environment for growing fruit and coarse grain.
However, in the past, in the traditional agriculture mode relying on weather and self-efficient
farming production, the villagers’ life condition was very poor. In 2002, Dapingan launched a
cultural tourism project and have gradually gotten rid of poverty to become a rich village.
According to a material “An Introduction to Dapingan as a Featured Tourism Village”
(Daipingan lu you te se cun jie shao 大平安旅游特色村介绍) I got from Dapingan village, by the
year 2010, the annual income of the village reached to 1.5 million RMB. There were 40 farmer’s
guesthouses and two hundred villagers involved in village tourism services.¹ In addition,
Dapingan’s cultural environment has been greatly improved. The village constructed a folklore
display stage, an entertainment center, public restrooms, and self-picking fruit gardens. Moreover, the mountain villagers have obtained the modern ideal through the course of rural and urban interaction that has made them successful in pursuit of new development in the village’s culture and economy. I have heard a few unbelievable stories in this small mountain village, from which we can see how today’s rural culture has been reshaped through cultural interaction of rural and urban, old and new, and through rural tourism initiatives and development.

**City People Come down to the Mountain Village**

When I first visited Dapingan village, a two-story building close to the entrance of the village drew my attention because a red silk sign hung in front of the entrance of the courtyard with the words *Zhi qing zhi jia* (Home for Zhi Qing), and the words *Da xue sheng she hui shi jian ji di* (the Rural Society Learning Base for High Education). I also read the message on a board on the wall: “We assist the development of the village; make friends with simple villagers; retake traditional virtue; return to the natural life in countryside. We work with Dapingan villagers to make this village a civil village, a tour village, a folklore-featured village. Dapingan mountain people and we urban men are one family. We voluntarily contribute our wisdom and skills to the Dapingan development. We hope more urban people interact with mountain villagers and make contributions to help the development of the village.” This statement was made by a special Dapingan villager Zhang Chengyong and his consultant team, the Dapingan New Countryside Cultural Development Research Group (大平安新农村文化发展研究会), which was formed by urban volunteers from Tianjin and Beijing. Mr. Zhang worked as the secretary of this organization.
In May 2002, Tianjin urban citizen Zhang Chengyong came to Dapingan village and settled down there. Why and for what purpose did this man leave the city for this mountain village? In 1968, when Mr. Zhang was 17, as one of three million young students in the Cultural Revolution, he was sent to the countryside in Hebei province for 10 years. In 1978, he returned to Tianjin city and worked for a transportation company. He was promoted to a management position. When he was fifty, his sympathy for poor peasants, gained from his earlier experience in Hebei, led him to quit his job in the city, and return to the countryside to help a poor village to get rid of poverty. After a careful investigation, he selected Dapingan village as his target.

Mr. Zhang came down to the village alone as a stranger. He did not bring money to the village, but he also did not ask for anything from the village. His passion, his initiative, and ideas for helping to establish Dapingan village tourism won the trust of village’s cadres and peasants, so they accepted him. At that time, Dapingan village was also planning to launch its folklore tourism and farmer’s guesthouse project, but they had not found an effective way and had not gotten any tourist to come to the village. Due to his ties to Tianjin city, Mr. Zhang brought the first urban guest group from there to Dapingan village. He offered his advice to the ongoing village tourism project. With his suggestions, the village set the goal to develop the village as a leisure, culture, and health-preserving place. From an urban person’s vision, Mr. Zhang provided his advice to villagers for how the farmer’s guesthouse services could meet the expectation of urban guests.

After ten years of the endeavor, up to 2011, Dapingan not only has developed many successful farmer’s guesthouses and attracted more and more urban guests to enjoy rural life scenery, but has also become an education base for urban students and a nostalgic home for the zhi qing (知青), a special social population group in China. During the Cultural Revolution
period from 1968 to 1976, following the call of Mao Zedong, a large number of city students went down the countryside to get re-education from peasants and farming work. After the end of the Cultural Revolution, they returned to their home city. Now this group has reached the ages fifty to sixty, and they commonly have a nostalgic feeling toward their special life experience when they were young. Mr. Zhang caught on to this social phenomenon and initiated Zhi qing zhi jia (home for zhi qing) to incorporate into Dapingan village tourism development.

To express their gratitude for Mr. Zhong’s contribution to the village development, in 2006, the Dapingan village committee named Zhang Chengyong as an honor villager of Dapingan village and rented a piece of land for fifty years to him to build a house in the village. Mr. Zhang use the land to build a house called Happy Home of the zhi qing (Le huo da yuan zhi qing zhi jia 乐活大院知青之家), an activity center for zhi qing people. The building includes a courtyard, a large hall, rooms, and accommodation facilities. According to a 2010 interview with Tianjin TV, Mr. Zhang claimed he got his idea for the design of this house because, along with the village’s comprehensive development, the village needs to have a large space to accommodate large groups of visitors. His objectives were to construct a rural education base
for urban students and a home for the *zhì qìng* group gathering meetings. Since 2008, the high education student organizations such as Beijing Forestry University Countryside Assistance Group and the Beijing High Education Rural Research Organization have sent students to Dapingan village to conduct rural social study programs. The Tianjin *Zhi Qing* Association also held annual large meetings in Dapingan village.²

While Dapingan displays its charming rural landscape and rural life to urban visitors, conversely, Dapingan villagers have also been inspired by urban culture to change their own lifestyle. In the interview program with Mr. Zhang made by Tianjin TV in 2010, Mr. Zhang stated that from the interaction of mountain villagers and urban visitors, mountain people’s traditional way of thinking and traditional way of life have been changed. He gave an example: “One day after dinner, I saw a couple strolling around in the street. I joked with them. ‘Strolling in the street is a city people’s hobby. How did you take this way?’ They replied to me, ‘Why do only your city people know to how to have fun but we cannot? We also want to have fun.’ So after getting in touch with city people, the mountain villagers learned the city people’s life style. I hope that villagers can become fashionable and urbane. In the meantime, I, a city man, become a rural elder.”³

Because nowadays the villagers have more money on hand, they have the capability to improve their own living environment and life conditions, from house design to house facilities and furniture. To accommodate city people’s hygiene standard, most households now in Dapingan have installed solar energy showers and flush toilets. They have adopted gas stoves and decorated their walls with tiles. In the past, farmers used to use dry firewood to cook and heat their homes. Heat from the cooking stove went to the *kāng*, a traditional brick- or mud-made bed, so the *kāng* could be kept warm. Nowadays, many households have adopted soft
mattress beds for city guests and for themselves. Some households still have the *kang* if guests want to get sense of what it was like to sleep on a *kang*. Commonly, a farmer home also has a sofa, TV, fridge, and modern furniture. Having a cell phone is very popular for peasants in the village, among both youth and elders. Villagers have gained more modern business awareness. They know how to manage their space to earn more money and how to provide better services to get customers to return.

![Figure 6.2 Farmer’s guesthouses and tourists in Dapingan village. Photo by author, 2011.](image)

On the other hand, rural life and rural culture have also become a new chapter in the life of the city people. During his stay in Dapingan village, Mr. Zhang has upgraded his own objectives. From an initial attempt to help mountain villagers to get out of poverty, he moved forward to guide the village to use its own natural and cultural resources to develop a rural cultural paradise, a leisure place, a nostalgic home, and an education base. He not only established a particular *zhi qing le huo* community home in Dapingan, but also created a *le huo* club website. He shot videos that record Dapingan villagers’ life stories. He posted them on the website, to a blog, and other visual media. He has already compiled a series of short films on the website with the title “The Stories of the City People and the Mountain People.” The film series
consists of three parts. The first part is his Dapingan experience narrative. The second part is
daily peasant life stories of an old couple, Liu Zhanguo, with a comparison of stories from
several years ago and from the present. The third part is a record of a traditional wedding
performance in Dapingan village and a recent scene from a wedding ceremony for the young
village couple Wang Jinshan and Li Yanping. He wanted to use these videos to record Dapingan
village’s real life and the changes of traditions. Through these endeavors in this small mountain
village, Mr. Zhang also found his spiritual home and realized his life’s value.

Another man who returned to his home in Dapingan village from Jixian town also
became part of a local contemporary legend. His name is Cui Fengquan. I heard his story when I
visited a farmer’s guesthouse in Dapingan village. This family was that of Cui Fengquan’s
brother Cui Fengqi. The family was managing a farmer’s guesthouse in a big courtyard. Older
grandpa Cui Fengqi and grandma took care of the family’s fruit trees. Young grandsons with
their parents ran a farmer’s guesthouse business that can accommodate forty guests. I chatted
with the grandson of the Cui family. He told me that like many other peasant workers in the city,
he had also spent a few years in the city. The city was noisy, busy, and hard to live in. He finally
decided to return to his village to make his life. The countryside is quiet and has fewer
entertainments than the city, but people there still can achieve something like his younger
grandpa Cui Fengquan, who was named as a contemporary Yu gong (fool man, an ironic name).

Yu gong (愚公) is a well-known figure in an old Chinese legend who is an old man spending his
lifetime to remove two mountains that block his way to home. When other people laugh at his
foolish action, he responds to them that if he could not accomplish it, his son and grandson will
continue. The deity admires Yu gong’s spirit and takes away the two mountains from the front of
his home. Due to the widespread influence of this legend, in Chinese culture, Yu gong has become a symbol for endless efforts made to achieve an objective.

Cui Fengquan took seven years to flatten a hill in the village and establish a Healthy Life Home on the flattened hill, so local people gave him the title “contemporary Yu gong.” As I saw, in front of the yard of the Healthy Life Home, two large boards stood in front of a big courtyard with big words on the board that read: “Dang dai Yu gong Cui Fengquan, Ping an yang sheng zhi jia” (contemporary Yu gong Cui Fengquan, Pingan Preserving Health Life Home). The board narrates Cui Fengquan’s life stories. Cui Fengquan left the village to join the army when he was young. Later he left the army and worked for the Jixian Travel Bureau. After he retired at the age of fifty-eight, he returned to the village and contracted this mountain from the village committee. He flattened the hill and built this Healthy Life Home. In addition, he also planted and managed a large amount of fruit trees in the village. In his retirement, he made a glorious legend in this small village.

The real stories reveal that traditional cultural value has been carried on in the making of a contemporary legend. The modernization process encourages ordinary people to creatively use their cultural resources, cultural values, wisdom, and energies to reconstruct their life spaces and to update their life patterns in a modern social environment. By 2010, eighteen city people had settled down in Dapingan village for a long-term stay.

**Tan Zhong and the Folklore Performance Stage**

While the outside forces and urban influences have penetrated the village, Dapingan native villagers have also actively sought ways to revitalize their old homeland in the modern world. When I came to the Dapingan village, appealing to me was a series of decorated objects in the center of the village: a grand village square, the paintings and calligraphies on the back of
the square wall, a folklore performing stage, a root carving home, and a studio of Tan Zhong calligraphy and painting. All these objects delivered a message to visitors that this village intended to capitalize on its cultural specialty. A slogan on the wall of the village read: “Make efforts to develop local folk culture and construct a countryside civilization (Da li hong yang min su wen hua, Gou zhu nong cun wen ming jian she. 大力弘扬民俗文化，构筑农村文明建设).”

Figure 6.3 Tan Zhong and his art studio in Dapingan village. Photo by author, 2011.

I was curious to know what these cultural objects mean to the Dapingan village. From my interview with the village leader Tan Zhong, I learned that all these cultural projects were initiated in the course of village tourism and cultural economic development. In a printed self-narrative material, which Tan Zhong gave to me “大山里的文化书记” (a Cultural Secretary in the Mountain), Tan Zhong acclaimed, “In 2003, the village tourism development was in a crucial stage and fell into dire straits. As tourists came to the village, except for eating and living, there was no any other activity. The tourists brought their money here and brought their money back to home. As a result, tourists only visited the village once. It was hard to get them back for the second time. Under this situation, the village committee decided to dig out Dapingan’s folklore and to construct cultural spots for promoting the village tourism. Tan Zhong firstly invested ten
thousand Yuan building up the first craft workshop Root Carving Workshop in Dapingan village. This construction has generated positive results: increased visitors’ interest in visiting exhibits and taking pictures, brought media’s attention, enhanced Dapingan’s reputation in tourism, prompted other farmer households to engage the root carving crafts, and created a new form of the Dapingan folk cultures.”

Tan Zhong was born and grew up in a poor family with nine children in Dapingan village. In the 1990s, influenced by the economic reform wave he ran a private business in Jixian town. In 2002, he accepted the offer from the village committee to manage Dapingan’s tourism initiative. In order to feature Dapingan as a cultural village, he advanced his personal skill in Chinese painting and calligraphy and learned to make root-carving crafts. He opened an art studio and invited urban artists to the village to hold workshops or to make their artworks in his studio. If I had not been in the studio in person, I would not believe that in just nine years, an ordinary peasant transformed himself to a peasant artist, the owner of an art studio, the manager of the Pingan folklore tourism enterprise, and a major leader in Dapingan village development.

From my interview with Tan Zhong, I learned more behind-the-scene stories as well as his opinion of tradition and modernity based on the situation of Dapingan village. Below are translated audio-recorded transcripts excerpted from my interview with Tan Zhong.

Date: 9/11/2011

Place: Dapingan village Tan Zhong Calligraphy and Painting Studio, Jixian

Interviewee: Tan Zhong, 52, male, the Party Secretary of Dapingan Village, Manager of Pingan Tourism Services Company.

Q: Your village tourism stresses cultural tourism. How did this idea come out?
A: Dapingan is an ancient village. We have quite a few literary men and teachers in the village, as many as 21 teachers. Villagers are talented at drawing, writing, and carving, so we struck on developing cultural tourism based on Dapingan’s characteristics. I had been a village teacher from 1979 to 1981. I like to do arts.

Q: How did you learn arts?

A: I am mainly self-taught. I read books and watched videos.

Q: Did you draw when you were a teacher?

A: A little bit.

Q: So you put more of yourself in artwork after you turned to tourism business, right?

A: Yes, because we featured our village as “cultural village,” as a head of the village, I need to set myself as a model to lead our villagers to make efforts in this direction. I started doing root-carving art in 2004. I learned it from beginning. Within three years, I inspired three other village households to get involved in root carving, and so far, we established this particular art in the village. Now the village has several root carving workshops. In 2008, I started to turn to calligraphy and painting. We set up two cultural platforms in the village. One is a folklore performance stage built in 2005. At the initial stage, the site was mainly used by villagers as the village’s public cultural setting. Gradually, it was shifted to tourist activity site. Another platform is the calligraphy and painting studio. Now urban artists sometimes come here to hold painting workshops.

Q: What purpose did you have for opening the painting workshop?

T: We can have social contact with outside guest artists and learn from each other, so we can improve our skills. The visiting urban artists’ also promote village tourism. Now the paintings are just for showing, not for selling. Later we may sell them. For the root carving,
the products are already on the market. With the development of tourism, in the future, we will establish painting as a cultural industry. This village does not have a remarkable scenic spot. In this region, every village has natural resources like green mountains and water, so we have to make some unique characteristics to attract tourists. In the past, our village had puppets, paper cutting, embroidery, weaving. In order to recover these traditional crafts, firstly, we need to have money to support these activities; otherwise, we cannot maintain them. Nowadays, every household has TV and TV programs keep people at home, so it is difficult to organize public events. For the puppet shows, if free, there are audiences. If they cost money, no one wants to buy the ticket. If our village has spare money to contribute to these programs, it may work. If no money, how can we make the programs? The villagers are simple in running farmer’s guesthouses. They think about housing, eating, and earning money. They think about things for today, but they do not think of the future. As a leader, I have to think of these things. Urban people came here not only for eating, sleeping, relaxing, and getting fresh air, but also for experiencing enjoyable activities. Why do some guests visit here several times in a year?! Because we have a folklore performing stage, they can use this stage to entertain and to display their talents. They have enjoyable eating, living, and cultural entertaining, so they say they will come again. Moreover, if there are more healthy cultural activities provided, then there is less gossip, less gambling among the villagers, so the studio and the stage are good for improving village’s civil construction. A certain kind of environment cultivates a certain kind of people. In 2010, our village was awarded by Tianjin city as a “Cultural Featured Village.”

Q: You said the folk performing stage is periodically used for holding activities. What activities are these?
T: We have held wedding ceremony performances for three years on the lunar calendar July 7 in the Qiqihar (乞巧) festival. We also had some other activities, such as singing, old and new, folk songs, or popular songs. There were four or five activities a month during the high tourism seasons. Urban tourists brought in ensembles. Urban and village people gathered together at the stage to play and watch performances.

Q: For the wedding ceremony performance, how was it taken?

A: Our village committee prepared wedding props according to the old wedding custom. Actors could be anyone. It is just a play to make a funny old custom show. Sometimes urban young couples also played new bride and groom. Many viewers were from cities, towns, or other villages. The big one we held was co-sponsored by the Jixian Travel Bureau and spent near fifty thousand yuan for this program. We invited several performance teams: a yangge dance team, a drum team, a kongzhu (yoyo) team, and music groups from other regions. We made magnificent scenery. Although we spent a lot, we appealed to more tourists with this show program. We also held real wedding ceremonies in the village. It was held in the farmer’s guesthouse for city people who want to have a traditional wedding ceremony in the rural environment. The wedding couple normally came from Tianjin city or Jixian town. The owner of the farmer’s guesthouse prepared everything—food, the wedding house, and activities. The wedding procedures were led by a folk wedding ceremony company, which was found by the owner of a farmer’s guesthouse. This is a kind of commercial wedding service program.

Question: Why, for these public or private programs, did the village committee have to hire people from other places rather than your villagers?
Tan: Our villagers mostly work on running their farmer’s guesthouse business and fruit plantations. A lot of things they need to take care in their daily life. They are tired after finishing a day of work. Thus, native villagers do not have enough energy to do these special activities. However, they can run traditional folklore workshops, normally including workshops like mill, *doufu*, and embroidery shops. I considered letting the city guests to use this platform (folk performing stage) to run cultural activities by themselves. The result shows are very good. First, urban guests holding cultural programs here could positively affect and promote our village’s cultural development. Second, when city guests come here to perform, they also bring in other guests, so it is good to extend tourist resources for our village and good for our village’s tourism economy.

Q: Do this way of managing the village cause the loss of your village’s traditions?

A: Actually, although we name them folklore shows, in the real world, it does not work if the show programs are too *tu* (rustic, old fashioned). They cannot satisfy modern people’s taste. The situation is the same as running a farmer’s guesthouse. Why have the farmer’s guesthouses developed in the model of “*Tu*, not too *Tu* (rustic), *Yang*, not too *Yang* (modern, fashionable) (土不能太土，洋不能太洋)” It is for meeting urban people’s demand. For me, I still keep my old house to run as a farmer’s guesthouse. It looks *tu se tu xiang* (土色土香 old style farmhouse with old appearance and sense) and very traditional. However, this kind of house cannot fit urban people’s demand. When they came to the village, the first thing they asked is if the room includes a toilet. This is urban people’s essential concern. Thus, compared to the old house, urban tourists likely choose the new house with a toilet, soft bed, and showers, so the new house could earn more than the old house. What do city people usually like to do with the old house, which has an old gate and old *kang*? Take
pictures! Just look around it, and then go! If you let them stay overnight, they do not want to. They pay attention to an enjoyable experience rather than a cultural experience. Rural tourists nowadays have not reached to this level. That is why our villagers want to tear down the old house and build the new house. In my opinion, some old ways need to be kept on, but some cannot be kept on. Now some villages build modern style buildings, like Maojiayu village. We want to learn from them to collaborate with urban investors, but I think we will not copy everything from there to here. The modern-style building is not suitable to the countryside. If people want to see tall buildings, there are a lot in cities to see. They come here and expect mainly to see the countryside scenery and a different lifestyle, so do not change the countryside to a city. We should still stress rural characteristics.

Q: Can you explain how changes are made while maintaining rural characteristics?

A: For the houses, our village committee does not have a formal unified scheme. Eighty percent of households still keep the type of the old flat houses, but merely change the materials for the roof and walls. In the past, we used stones for house walls and dark gray tiles on the roof. Now bricks replace stones, and the red tiles replace the dark grey tiles. Window materials have generally been changed. The old wooden, checkered window looks pretty, but is not useful. Wood material needs to be painted every year. It decays more easily. Now the aluminum metal window does not need any maintenance after it is installed. It is durable in sunshine and rain and can be used longer. The village committee cannot force villagers to keep old traditional ways. If we require them to keep an old way, they cannot get income from it. If you think this kind of the old house is a form of culture and it should be kept, you must make good policies and give money for support, so they could keep the old and build a new house to live in. If there is no relevant policy, a villager may just have one
house throughout an entire lifetime. If you do not allow him to upgrade houses, when his son grows up to the marriage age, he even could not get a bride. There are all kinds of issues.

Q: From your point of view, in the connection of rural and urban and in the process of urbanization in rural areas, do you think there are obvious changes to the village tradition from ideologies to life patterns?

A: The agricultural production manner changes a lot. In the past, life income for villagers mainly relied on growing grains, but now they do not like to work in the fields, to plant grains. They turn to tourism. The land production also turned into tourism production. Villagers choose to plant fruit trees and mountain products according to tourists’ demands and market values, no longer traditional types. Like my own, I just planted a few chestnut and persimmon trees. The ground has been bare. It is easier to take care of trees than grains. Just do some trimming and pesticide control. Some households may to run farmer’s guesthouse fulltime, so they have no energy to take care of their lands. These lands can be recollected and managed by a corporation, to develop as a plantation and produce tourism products. Due to the change of production manner, villagers’ lives have generally improved. Some households who do not run farmer’s guesthouses can sell local mountain and fruit goods to tourists or work for local tourism construction projects, so they can still earn more money than before. Before 2001, the average income per person was around three thousand yuan, but now the average income has increased to twelve thousand yuan. In the past, young villagers wanted to leave the village, but now more young people return home to run a tourism business after graduating from school. Nowadays the urban environment is poorer than the rural areas because of pollution and heavy population. In the past, people sought to get a city household registration, but now the thing has changed. It is not easy if people want
to obtain a village household registration. In my case, can I afford such a big art studio in a
city? No. But I can have one here. Thus, rural life has been changed. People’s view of rural
life has also been changed.”

Tan Zhong’s words reflect the situation of the transformation of peasant life. Now
peasants seek another way of life in the same spatial environment through redesign and reuse of
their space and by connecting their life world with outside even global world. Like his family,
Tan Zhong and his son-in-law managed a painting art shop. His son operated an electronic
business, and his wife ran a farmer’s guesthouse. No one in his family was a traditional farmer.
Thus, peasant identities in contemporary are undergoing change. The old conception of
“peasant” is no longer suitable to identify them.

Root Carving Craftsman Gao Changgui

In Dapingan, influenced by the village elites, ordinary peasants have also tried to seek
some opportunities to change their own lives. Gao Changgui is one of them. He has been doing
root-carving art in the village and opened a root carving shop in his own home.

Figure 6.4 Signboard of “Wooden Crafts and Root Carvings,” in the village. Photo by author, 2011.
A painted advertisement for the “Wooden Crafts and Root Carving Home” was put on the wall on the main street of the village with four parallel poetic sentences expressing Gao Changgui’s ideas about root carving: “Exploring the profound mystery of roots; seeking harmony with nature; making friendship widely; cultivating life through root carving (探讨根的奥秘；寻求自然美缘；结交八方朋友，修养生养人生).” It was this sign that guided me to the Root Carving Home. In this Root Carving Home, I found that, unlike Tan Zhong’s success through running farmer’s guesthouse to support his painting art studio, even unlike other village households who became rich from the farmer’s guesthouse business, Gao Changgui’s living condition had not been significantly improved at the time I interviewed him. This fifty-eight-year-old craftsman lived in an old house with very simple furniture and appeared quite poor. He told me that he did not have spare rooms to run farmer’s guesthouses. Besides doing root carving, he still did daily farm work in the field. From talking with him, I learned his stories and his struggle.

Gao Changgui recounted that, when he was 20, he wanted to learn some craft skills, and he had been a carpenter. He sometimes helped villagers make furniture for free when they asked him, and he also carving music instruments. From these practices, he mastered some craft skills. Ten years ago, in the development of village tourism in his village, under Tan Zhong’s influence doing root-carving crafts, he followed up and became obsessed. During the daytime, he worked in the field. In the evening, he did work on his root-carving craft. Since there are plentiful woods in the surrounding mountains, he collected wooden roots in the mountains during winter. Around his yard, numerous wooden roots were piled up. He said he has passion for doing root carving. Sometimes he worked on it overnight and was intoxicated. He has no family tradition of doing root carving, but since he seemed to have a special inspiration for this craft, he mastered this skill.
very well. When he looks at the natural shape of a wooden root, he can get an idea to create a kind of artistic figure. As the Dapingan village tourism has continued developing, he was considering doing full-time root carving. Thus, although his family life is still hard and he has not found a secure way to sell his craft products, his enthusiasm for root carving remains. His root carving works have received awarded in a competition held by the Jixian Cultural Bureau.

Gao Changgui recently built a new room in his yard especially for displaying and storing his completed root carving works. When he took me to this display room, I could not believe that this thin, ordinary farmer who wore old clothes and resided in a poor room could create so many amazing artistic crafts from very common materials such as wood roots, glass, and gourds and put them in this nice room setting. These artistic products were designed by him with some creative ideas: a table lamp made of a glass bottle, a brush pot made of a wood root, and a flower vase made of a gourd. When I appreciated these elegant works made by Gao Changgui, this farmer artist expressed to me his concern that he had faced difficulties selling his artwork to support his family life. He pointed out that although urban tourists came to the village, they were mainly interested in buying some special local natural food products to bring to their urban
home, but not much interested in spending money buying some art products from a peasant. I asked him why he did not think to take his products to some art fairs or to open a store in Jixian town to sell them. He complained that the registration for attending an art fair normally cost three thousand Yuan. To rent a store or booth in town to sell products was also costly. He lacked money to try these ways. Thus, he concluded that although he had the passion and skills to make these craft works, although he made a contribution to the village cultural tourism, although his artwork was awarded by the Jixian Cultural Bureau, he still faced the dilemma of doing folk craft and securing his family life. The major problem was that he needed financial and social support for marketing his root carving works.

From interviewing this peasant artist, I definitely perceived his hardship, his passion, his persistence, and his anxiety. When I observed Gao Changgui’s living condition and craftworks and when I listened to his life stories, I compared him with famous local clay sculpture master Yu Qingcheng. They both are in the category of folk artist with a peasant origin working in the field. They both are self-educated and have passion and talent in pursuit of arts. They both are not inheritors but creators, making a local artwork. They both experienced the reforms and changes of China’s society and have inevitably get involved in the cultural economic market in China’s contemporary economic atmosphere. Their craft works both have made a contribution to local culture and tourism in a different scope. However, the one has already earned fame and financial freedom. The other one is still unknown and struggles to earn a living. At this viewpoint, a question is raised. In contemporary China, when inheritors of intangible cultural heritage have been paid public attention with protection and support by means of policies and finance, from the national government to local agencies, should the new cultural artists also be supported and promoted by aspects of society?
Staying in a Farmer’s Guesthouse at the Foot of Pan Mountain

Although rural life actually has been undergoing change, to many people the terms “rural” and “village.” still semantically mean “romantic simplicity and golden traditionality,” and “in many cases, the countryside is portrayed as a container of traditional cultures, national identities, and authentic lifestyles” (Kneafsey 2001: 763). Urban adventurers in rural settings continue searching old traditions and getting refreshment from the dull and noisy urban setting. As a result, rural tourism has been keeping prosperous. From an urban visitors’ perspective, rural still a place of longing, away from pollution, noise, stress, and the crowd. Villagers have tried every possible means to satisfy the desire of urban visitors for the purpose of fulfilling their economic and life interests. When I was in Dapingan, I met an old woman from Tianjin city who had stayed in Tang Zhong’s farmer’s guesthouse for over ten days. She said to me, “Here is good, fresh air…” Her words reveal that urban visitors come to the countryside to seek something they have missed in the city. The phenomenon implies a general, mutual, beneficial exchange principle: human beings keenly seek what they lack in their life environment. City people seek fresh air, natural food, and simple human relationship in rural world, whereas, rural people seek a comfortable modern life style from city people. This is a course of cultural exchange, custom exchange, and space exchange. This mutual, beneficial exchange principle can also be illustrated by my experience in other villages of Jixian. Below I will account a real experience in a farmer’s guesthouse at the foot of Pan Mountain to see how rural and urban cultures are connected and exchanged in the farmer’s guesthouse business.

In June 2011, I stayed in the Shun Farmer’s guesthouse for a participant-observation of the local farmer’s guesthouse business. The Shun farmer’s guesthouse was in Lianhualing
Village of Guanzhuang Township, right in the Pan Mountain Tourism Park. The place is about twelve kilometers away from the Northwest Jixian town. At the time I was there, Lianhualing village had around one hundred households. Since the village has the geographic advantage of the famous Pan Mountain scenery area, along with the increase of Pan Mountain tourists, the farmers in this village have mostly turned to tourism business and tourism based agricultural activities. Eighty percent of households in the village run farmer’s guesthouses. For those households that cannot run a farmer’s guesthouse often stay in front of their homes to sell local mountain products and fruit to tourists. I asked an old man who was selling fruits in front of his house why he did not run a farmer’s guesthouse. He replied to me that doing this business needed an investment of at least sixty thousand yuan. At his age, how long would it take to earn back this money? Second, his children left the village to work in the city. Now only the old couple stayed at home, so they did not have enough energy to manage a farmer’s guesthouse. Third, although they have three spare rooms in the house, the local Jixian Travel Bureau set a set of standard for running local farmer’s guesthouses. The house facilities must meet these standards in order to get the license to run a farmer’s guesthouse business. It includes having air condition, a shower, and a bathroom. The rooms in his house did not have these facilities. The old man showed having no alternative face. He said, “Anyway, those households running guesthouses ate big meals, but I could have some soup.”

In contrast, the Shun farmer’s guesthouse was eating a big meal. Run by Mr. Chen, this farmer’s guesthouse’s business was quite brisk. Mr. Chen was forty-six and his wife Ms. Kong was forty-three. A high school daughter was seventeen. In earlier years, they went to Beijing to do businesses and then ran a restaurant in Bangjun Township. Later, when the tourism business grew up in their home village, they moved back to Lianhualing village to run farmer’s
guesthouse. When I entered the Shun farmer’s guesthouse, I was surprised to see how a farmer’s guesthouse was designed so sophisticated with a blend of traditional and modern house styles.

The house as a whole was in a traditional, flat house layout consisting of a front courtyard and a back courtyard, main rooms in a south-north direction, and wing-rooms in an east-west direction. All the walls of the house were pasted with white tiles. A row of main rooms with a hall in the middle of the unit partitioned the front courtyard from the back courtyard. The host family occupied one main room and the hall room was used as the inner dinning site. The front yard entrance did not have a local, traditional, tall and closed wooden gate that was commonly seen in the past, but a wide, low metal railing gate. Next to the entrance gate, the first wing-room was for laundry, with a washer inside. The other rooms were furnished as guest rooms. There were seventeen guest rooms that include two larger rooms with traditional *kang* beds at the end of the back yard. All guest rooms were equipped and furnished in modern style. Each room was equipped with an air conditioning, a solar energy shower, a heater, a flush toilet, a color TV, table lamps, night tables, and soft beds either in twin size or in full size. A big kitchen in a wing-room of the backyard was equipped with the gas stove, freezer, refrigerator, and range. A special design with this unit was the usage of the space on the flat roof. The flat roof, installed with a tent roof and hurdles, was constructed and decorated as an open-air dining and gathering space. There were several large dining tables with chairs, sofas, game tables, TV, a computer, and a music studio for large groups of people dining and entertaining there. Regarding the facilities, this farmer’s guesthouse unit almost had no big differences from a hotel in a city, except for the location. The price was eighty-five yuan per person per day, including three meals when I was there. Compared to the price of a mid-level city hotel, the farmer’s guesthouse is cheaper and city people can enjoy the rural life scenery, leisurely life pace, and local farm food.
How did urban visitors enjoy rural life they imagined and expected? In my stay in the Shun farmer’s guesthouse, I encountered city guests of a variety of types. The first is young couples: When I came in on Thursday, a young woman and man were eating their lunch in the dining hall, and the hostess went to the hill in the village to pick up some apricots from her fruit garden for them to take home. After the lunch, the young couple left with a bag of apricots, their memories of Pan Mountain, and time spent in this quiet village. Another type is family groups. On Friday before lunch, there was a family with six members who came from Tianjin city. They were three generations and said they came here last year. The hostess provided a meal called nong jia fan (farmer home meal) for them. After lunch, this family chatted and played poker in their rooms. Until around 5pm, when outside was not hot, they walked around the village and nearby Pan Mountain spots. When they came back, dinner was ready for them. They stayed one night and left the next day after breakfast. They took breakfast in the dining hall sitting around a table while the host family sat at another table for their own meal. One of guests said: “It’s so good to run a farmer’s guesthouse. Urban people often come to your home. We eat under one roof like one family, how happy it is!” I chatted with them. They told me that they left home to here just for enjoying a quiet place, an alternative to an urban environment, not for seeing mountains. The third type visitor is visitors from a company. In China, the national policies for the long weekend and holiday week off have promoted urban companies to organize their workers to take rural tours as a kind of enjoyable activity. On Friday evening, a group of thirteen people from Beijing guided by a tour guide came to the Shun farmer’s guesthouse. They aimed to visit Pan Mountain and to taste farmer meals. The hostess carefully prepared the meals for this group of guests because she wanted to show them how good a nong jia fan (farmer meals) she could provide in hopes that they would come back again in the future.
Tasting a traditional farmer home meal is an important part of the service package of the farmer’s guesthouse. While the living standard has to be updated to fit urban visitors’ hygiene requirements (such as making the bed, shower, and toilet) in farmer’s guesthouse management, eating has been an easier thing for the remaining local traditional food style to accommodate. Food strikes on rural identity, because one of the interests for urban visitors is to taste local vernacular food, to enjoy a farm fresh meal that they cannot get in their own city. For farmer’s guesthouse owners, it is also a great occasion for them to signify the essential difference between living in a city hotel and in a rural farmer’s guesthouse. As Bessière indicates, “The culinary heritage of rural areas is strongly linked to a peasant identity and to specific eating habits and production. It brings about a style of eating which is full of imaginary symbols” (Bessière 1998: 29).

The featured Jixian local farmer home meals (nong jia fan 农家饭) normally include local wild plants, farmer-made bean noodles, local mountain mushrooms, home-fed chickens, xiang chun (香椿) plants from local trees, and local corn-made foods. The meal consists of fan (饭 grain food) and cai (菜 dishes). When I was at the Shun farmer’s guesthouse, the dinner dishes the hostess prepared for the thirteen people group included: cold mixed wild plants (凉拌野菜), boiled chicken and mushrooms (炖蘑菇鸡), fried eggs (煎鸡蛋), cold mixed bean noodles (拌凉粉), fried dry bean curd (炒干豆腐), cold mixed pig ears (凉拌猪耳朵), cold mixed cucumber strips (凉拌黄瓜丝), cold mixed tomato (凉拌西红柿), deep fried peanuts (油炸花生米), cooked green pepper with pork (柿子椒炒肉), boiled Chinese cabbage with bean curd (炖白菜豆腐), fried potato strips (炒土豆丝), fried xiang chun eggs (香椿炒鸡蛋), boiled pumpkin with red jujubes (红枣炖南瓜), and red cooked local lake fish (红烧鱼). The grain food served was steamed rice, man tou (馒头 steamed buns), and corn cakes (玉米饼). The breakfast meal in the morning was
corn gruel (玉米粥), roasted cakes (烙饼), cold mixed vegetables (拌凉菜), and boiled salted eggs (煮咸鸡蛋). These dishes were made not with sophisticated techniques and ingredients from a cookbook, but just from a traditional farmer’s meal repertory used in daily life or for some feast occasions. The urban guests looked very excited to taste these normal farmers’ dishes. When they ate the corn gruel, they praised it and wanted to get more.

Actually, from sleeping to entertaining, the farmer’s guesthouse offered almost a modern life style. Thus, the farmer home meal with corn gruel and wild plant dishes plays as an authentic farm life scene and the symbol of rural culture provided by the hosts of the farmer’s guesthouses to their city guests. In Bessière words, “By eating a so-called natural or traditional product, the eater seems to incorporate, in addition to nutritional and phycho-sensorial characteristics of the food, certain symbolic characteristics: one appropriates and embodies the nature, culture and identity of an area” (Bessière 1998: 25). Such increased awareness is also revealed from recent year annually held “Happy Farmer Home Cooking Competitions (农家乐厨艺大赛)” sponsored by Jixian Travel Bureau and participated by local farmer’s guesthouses aiming at developing particular local food tradition with modern nutrition ideas to promote local rural cultural tourism. Besides running the farmer’s guesthouse, the host Mr. Chen also kept a job in Pan Mountain Park, so he offered park admission coupons to the guests who stayed in his farmer’s guesthouse. From this incident, I detected that this farmer’s guesthouse has applied modern business management tactics to their daily business practices. The identity of Mr. Chen, like other modern peasants I have met (for example, Han Zhen, Wang Zuozhong and Tan Zhong), become ambiguous and needs to be redefined in the contemporary social context.
A Rural Paradise: Guojiagou Village

Guojiagou is located in the mountain area of northern Jixian, affiliated with Xiaying Township. It is about twenty kilometers away from Jixian town and has 51 households, 176 populations, and 936 mu arable/planting land. Locals call Guojiagou as a “sai shang shui xiang” (塞上水乡 a water village of the plateau) because of a small lake called Guojiagou Reservoir and a 1500 meter long creek in the village, which provides the mountain village with charming water scenery. In recent years, Guojiagou village has used its natural advantages, fruit plantations, and local gourd agricultural products to develop village tourist programs. The village was assigned as a key tourism village by Jixian County and the Tianjin city government. There are two major programs conducted in the village tourism development process. The first is the hulu (gourd) painting folk art. The other is the farmer’s guesthouse. In my field trip to the rural paradise of Guojiagou village, I observed the ongoing situation of the two programs there.

Since there was no public bus yet from Jixian town to Guojiagou, the only way to travel was by private transportations. I got on a private middle-size travel vehicle that would run toward the direction of Guojiagou. An old woman and her two middle age daughters also sat on it. They were from Tianjin. On the way, I heard that the driver picked them up at the Jixian train station and drove them to a farmer’s guesthouse in Qingshanling village, where there was also a tourism village next to Guojiagou village. They were there last year. The seventy-six-year-old lady told me that she liked to stay in a rural village and she hoped she could come once a year. She liked simple villagers as well as farmer home dishes made with the local plant xiang chun. The transportation climbed up for about half an hour on a mountain road and dropped me off near the village. I passed through a smooth countryside road in the field, marched to the Guojiagou village.
The Gourd Painting Craft Program

When I arrived at the village, the first thing that caught my eye was an approximately 1000-meter-long beautiful green corridor, tangled with numerous gourds, running through a straight main street in the village. At the entry of the village, a sign for the village’s gourd painting exhibition was hung on the gate of the Village Committee Office. A few villagers squatted on the side of road selling walnuts, cucumbers, etc. I noticed that one old man with a dark and furrowed face stood beside some small and large gourd painting works either hanging on a stand or placed on cartons. I chatted with this old man and learned that his name was Pan Yongxiang, sixty-three years old. These gourd painting works were made by him.

Figure 6.6 Gourd painting craftsman Pan Yongxiang. Photo by author 2011.

Guojiagou’s gourd painting art was developed under the Jixian government guideline of yi cun yi pin (一村一品 one village, one featured cultural product). The village owns a lot of gourd plants because of its rich water resource. Thus, when considering developing a featured folk craft, Guojiagou village chose the gourd painting craft. The village committee held a gourd-painting workshop and encouraged villagers to learn the gourd painting technique to make it on their own. However, such an expectation actually did not produce an effective result. According
to Pan Yongxiang’s account, after several years, only he persists in doing this craft. Pan told me that he had talent in painting and drawing when he was young, but during the Cultural Revolution, he stopped to attend school and then had to work in the field in the village. When the village launched the gourd painting art program and held a training workshop session, he attended the workshop and mastered the gourd painting skill very fast. After learning it, he continued his practice and became successful in the village. He was featured in Tianjin newspapers and TV. He explained to me that, for planting, drying, and scraping gourds, everyone could learn, but ironing paintings on gourds requires some special skills and techniques. Not just anyone was able to do this job.

Pan Yongxiang wore a bright red t-shirt, but his face still looked older than his age. The face told me how difficult this craftsman’s life had been. His wife is mute. He had to take care of farming work besides doing gourd-painting crafts. He had one acre of land planted with gourds, sowing in the spring and collecting in late fall. In the winter, during the evening and on rainy days, he enjoyed doing gourd painting. There were ironed patterns or words on the gourds which almost portrayed with the traditional Chinese motifs of fu (福 fortune), lu (禄 bright future), cai (财 wealth), and shou (寿 longevity). Hulu sounds like fu lu (fortune and bright future). In Chinese folk beliefs, the gourd functions to get rid of evil and symbolizes wealth. The gourd also features plentiful seeds, so it symbolizes the flourish of offspring. When Pan Yongxiang was selling his gourd painting works, he explained these folk beliefs to the potential buyers and pointed out that holding a gourd painting work can help a person pray for safety, wealth, and offspring. Taking these good words, I also bought a gourd painting from him and I still have it with me.
Besides talking with this gourd-painting craftsman, I also entered the gourd painting exhibition room that was housed in the courtyard of the village committee. The room was carefully decorated with various gourds. A glass showcase against a wall displayed gourd painting works made by the villagers in the past years, but not many. It reveals that this art initiative project in the village actually has not been very fruitful. However, the village encouragement of this cultural project doubtless inspired Pan Yongxiang, an ordinary peasant, to get on track to seek a dream from his youth and do what he likes now. Moreover, this program also made the village identify with gourd culture and promoted the village’s reputation for tourism. Thus, when a foreign couple wanted to have a Chinese wedding ceremony, Guojiagou was selected as their wedding place.

Figure 6.7 Guojiagou village’s gourd painting crafts showcase. Photo by author, 2011.

A Foreigners’ Chinese Wedding Ceremony in Guojiagou Village

In Dapingan village, Tan Zhong recounts the arrangement of the performance of the traditional wedding ceremony. In Guojiagou village, I witnessed a real wedding ceremony for a foreign couple held in the Liqun farmer’s guesthouse. From my observation, this traditional
The cultural event actually is not a purely traditional one. It mixes with cultural imagination, performance, and multi-culture elements crossing time and space. The traditional wedding ceremony was repackaged, but the particular social functions for holding this ceremony were fulfilled. The bride and groom enjoyed the exotic wedding experience and the Liqun farmer’s guesthouse was proud of hosting such a foreign wedding, beyond the money they earned from the event.

The wedding ceremony stirred the village. Although the villagers got accustomed to seeing outside tourists in the village, a foreign wedding ceremony held in the village was still an unusual event for them. In the front of the Liqun farmer’s guesthouse, a lot of villagers gathered there waiting for the start of the ceremony. Because the ceremony would be held in the afternoon, I had time to observe the site of the wedding ceremony and the preparations for the ceremony. The Liqun farmer’s guesthouse was situated in the middle of the beautiful gourd corridor of the village. Two rows of houses were enclosed in a long, square courtyard. The courtyard was built in a traditional garden style, with white walls and a dark, ashy wall top. The gate of the courtyard was stylized with traditional double door leaves in red and a pavilion built on the top. The big double word xi (joyful), which is particularly used on the occasion of a wedding ceremony in Chinese tradition, were pasted on the wall of the entrance. Inside the courtyard, four big words—jia, he, fu, shun (家, 和, 福, 顺 family, harmony, luck, smooth)—were written on red scrolls that were hung on the east end of the yard wall. Three big round tables were set in the yard with some peanuts and sunflower seeds on them. On the occasion of a Chinese wedding ceremony, peanuts and sunflower seeds embrace particular ritual meanings and are necessary items for the ceremony. According to traditional Chinese custom, the word for peanut in Chinese is hua sheng. Hua (flower) is a metaphor for the female. Shen (生) is a
homophone of sheng (生 to deliver a baby). The word for sunflower seed in Chinese is gua zi (瓜子). Gua is a metaphor for a female’s womb and zi 子 is a homophone of er zi (son). Thus, the two items used on the wedding ceremony bear the traditional Chinese idea of wishing for the new couple to have male offspring.

I talked with a man who was a colleague of the groom as well as the organizer of this wedding event. This special wedding ceremony was put on by a China-Germany Cooperative Medicine Equipment Company from Tianjin city. The groom was the German partner, Ajimo. Ajimo wished to hold a Chinese style wedding, so they selected a farmer’s guesthouse in Guojiagou village as the site of this ceremony. I heard from the owner of the Liqun farmer’s guesthouse that he had run his guesthouse for four years and accommodated wedding ceremonies eleven times, but this was the first time he held a wedding ceremony for foreigners.

![Figure 6.8 A foreigners’ traditional Chinese wedding ceremony in Guojiagou. Photo by author, 2011.](image)

At 2:30 p.m., a traditional Chinese wedding ceremony began. The German groom Ajimo and bride Christina dressed in the traditional Chinese wedding costumes. Ajimo wore dark red Tang-style clothes, a black hat with hanged a big silk red flower in front. Christitina wore an elegant red Chinese qipao (gown) and a red cloth covering her head and face. While the wedding
music blared, Ajimo rode a horse through the gourd corridor to meet Chrisitina, who was waiting for him at the east end of the gourd corridor. The crowd of people followed behind to watch the noise scene. When Ajimo approached Chrisitina, he dismounted from the horse. The master of the ceremony spoke to the groom: “Today is an exciting moment. In front of all your relatives and friends, please say a word to your bride.” The groom responded, “Wo fei chang ai ta (I love her very much)!“ The master continued to lead the groom: “According to Chinese tradition, new groom should open the red bridal veil for the bride.” The groom followed the instruction to open the red veil from his bride’s head. Then he assisted the bride on the horse and led the horse to the Liquan farmer’s guesthouse. A six-man band marched to the front. They played joyful Chinese music with the traditional instruments of horn, gang, surna, sheng, and drum to make a lively Chinese wedding atmosphere. When the procession was approaching the gate, firecrackers blasted in front of the gate and made big noises. After that, the master announced, “The bride enters the door!” Surrounded by the crowded people, the groom and the bride entered the courtyard.

Figure 6.9 Groom and bride kissing on the wedding ceremony. Photo by author, 2011.
After people sat down, the emcee started to express good wishes to the new couple, and a German interpreter on the site translated his words to the groom and the bride. He starts his speech with a Chinese poem: “Yi zhao xi jie qian nian lu, Bai sui fu yu wan chun xin. (一朝喜结千年侣，百岁赋予万春新 a happy partnership for thousand years, a deep love like the newlywed for a hundred years).” He continued: “Today is a big lucky and happy day. We gathered together to celebrate Mr. Ajimo and Ms. Christina’s wedding. Please let us have a big applause to bless the newlyweds!” Then, he asked the groom and the bride: “Respectful Mr. Ajimo, do you want to marry to beautiful Christina? Respectful Ms. Christina, do you want to marry to handsome Ajimo?” After he heard confirmation from both of them, he asked the groom to give a best word to the bride. The groom Ajimo said again: “I love her very much!” They kissed each other.

Figure 6.10 Bride and groom bowing to each other. Photo by author, 2011.

Then the groom and bride followed the emcee’s instruction to make courtesy calls. First, they bowed three times to the Heaven and the Earth. Second, they bowed three times toward the direction of their hometown. Third, they bowed three times to each other. When the groom and bride bowed to each other, the emcee said things such as “A pair of lovely mandarin ducks flies together; time will pass, people will get old, but the love will never change.” After bowing, the
groom and the bride drank the nuptial wine with entangling arms. Everyone else also drank a cup of wine to celebrate them. To the final step, the emcee declared, “As a Chinese tradition, after drinking the nuptial wine, you become a real couple. We wish you happiness every day, wealth in the four seasons, heath every year, love forever. Now, enter your bridal chamber.” After his words, the groom and bride were sent into the newlywed room inside courtyard.

The whole process of the wedding ceremony followed the traditional Chinese wedding ritual procedures, and it was designed by a wedding ceremony service company. The objective of the event is to provide the German groom and bride with an authentic traditional Chinese wedding ritual experience, as they desired. For the foreign guests, urban China has been westernized in the course of modernization. The rural setting seemed a place retaining authentic traditions. Actually, this is just a cultural perception. Ajimo and Christina’s rural village wedding ceremony still fell into the category of an arranged, performed ceremony scheme through a its planning and performance, rather than an original traditional Chinese wedding ceremony.

From the ceremony, it is easily seen that the western way of gestures and verbal expressions intertextually appeared in this traditional Chinese wedding ceremony event. For instance, according to the marriage customs and social morals of traditional Chinese society, marriage is commonly arranged by parents, not by the engaged persons themselves. In addition, Chinese people in the past normally did not and could not express their love directly by hugging, kissing, or through direct words, rather than in an indirect way. Otherwise, it will be seen against the norms of social morals. This particular cultural way formed from thousands of years of federal norms and rituals. Some western scholars view it as a lack of strong verbal expression of emotions, and they pointed to it as a uniqueness of Chinese culture (Yan 2003). As Sulamith Potter and Jack Potter indicate, “Presently, marriage choice is ideally based on what are called
‘good feelings’ but the phrase is never used in the sense of a romantic or passionate emotional response” (Potter 1990: 191). Yan argues that this kind analysis highlights the exotic features of the other from an emic point of view. Chinese villagers have hundred ways to express their heart, which can appear as idioms of love, food, care, or comfortable words without uttering the phrase “I love you.” He also points out that with flow of information and rapid spread of a global pop culture, the earlier lack of strong verbal expressive of love and subtle modes of expressing intimacy are likely to disappear among the next generation of rural youth (Yan 2003: 82-83). Thus, the direct verbal expressive of love or kiss in a public occasion is a western manner.

However, in this traditional Chinese wedding ceremony scenario, the emcee asked the groom and the bride if they wanted to marry each other. This is obviously a western wedding formula. The groom’s frankly expression “I love her very much!” was also a modern expression, in a westernized expressive manner. Thus, such a re-play of traditional Chinese wedding ceremony absorbed western wedding cultural elements and modern cultural elements. This evidence demonstrates that the reproduction of tradition was not a duplication of the original one, as assumed by some, but an intertextual, remaking process in which traditional culture has been re-comprehended and re-structured by participants. The experience of other cultures is a repackaging process of self-culture and other cultures. This applies to the both host’s culture and the guest’s culture.

A notable phenomenon in contemporary China is that the western-style wedding ceremonies have been commonly adopted by young Chinese. Newlyweds wear western ceremonial wedding dress to take wedding pictures in a studio, ride in decorated vehicles to the wedding venue, and hold the event in a hotel or a restaurant. They may also wear traditional Chinese wedding dress on some occasions of a wedding. During my stay in Jixian, I often
witnessed the western style wedding ceremonies held at the Yuyang Hotel, a four-star hotel in town. The western wedding dress, music, and traditional Chinese symbols and metaphors like the dragon and pearl simultaneously appeared on the wedding occasions. In the picture I took from a wedding ceremony in the front of the Yuyang Hotel, the letters in Chinese on the wide red cloth read, "Groom Wang xx and bride Wu xx, 'Love Waltz' Wedding ceremony. Charming Maple Woods Wedding Ceremony." It shows that while a western couple was longing for an authentic, traditional Chinese wedding in a Chinese village, some young Chinese couples long for a romantic, western wedding in a modern location. Thus, cultural representation and re-experience is a recomposed and exchanged process, and is created in a contemporary social context in a particular time and space, by particular individuals.

Figure 6.11 A western style wedding ceremony held at Yuyang hotel in town. Photo by author, 2011.

**Preservation and Reinvention of Tradition in Xijingyu Village**

In my stay in Jixian in 2011, Xijingyu village was an ideal place for me to conduct my field research because the village is located in a transferring zone between town and rural areas, just 2.5 km away from the central town of Jixian, on the back of Mount Fujun. It is also because
this village had a particular name, Xijingyu Folklore Photograph Village, printed on the Jixian Map that used to be an important tool for me to locate my field observation spots when I had just settled down in Jixian. Why did Xijingyu village receive this title? The simple reason is that Xijingyu has still kept an old, simple, and traditional rural landscape and rural life style, and many photographers and filmmakers have been keen to shoot the old scenery of the village and use the place to produce their art works. Beyond this, there are more causes for me. Xijingyu is the only village in Tianjin region elected into the National List of the Famous Historic Cultural Villages.

In the rapid social changes in the course of the modernization of China, Xijingyu village, an old mountain village, faces a dilemma. On the one hand, Xijingyu has been titled and honored as a live model of the old historic cultural village. The village features the old stone scenery: stone houses, stone roads, stone mills, and so on. Because these tangible scenes still exist, Xijingyu village has attracted outside visitors coming to search for the old rural culture. Conversely, the benefits earned from visitors have spurred the local government and the village to seek further ways to utilize the old cultural scenery. On the other hand, when modern life has actually encircled Xijingyu and the villagers have actually communicated daily and gotten in touch with modern life through connecting with urban life and the outside world, it is questionable how one can expect Xijingyu to keep its old face forever and stay away from modern life just to satisfy modern visitors’ interests. Xijingyu villagers have been struggling with the changing and the unchanging. What is the way for Xijingyu to have a modern life in a real world? The issue corresponds to the current national debate on how to preserve and develop ancient rural villages in the course of China’s modernization, as it has been argued by Feng Jicai.
in his articles as well as his dialogue with China’s former prime minister Wen Jiabao, as I mentioned in the Chapter 1.

**Feng Jicai Speaking on Preserving Historic Cultural Villages**

Feng Jicai has a tie to Xijingyu village. At the east entrance of Xijingyu village, a big wall screen inscribed with Feng Jicai’s handwriting declares the special title of this village: “Xijingyu min su she ying cun” (西井峪民俗摄影村 Xijingyu folklore photography village). Feng Jicai was an influential novelist in the 1980s in China. His novels *Shen bian*, *San cun jin lian*, *Pao da shuang deng*, and *Yin yang ba gua*, are important works in the fever of “searching for cultural root” in the contemporary literature of China. In the 1990s, Feng Jicai shifted from writing novels to writing essays. He became an active social activist to call for preserving historical cultural heritage and civilization of China during the radical changes of the modernization process of China and the wave of globalization. Under his proposal, the second Saturday in June was officially set up by the Chinese government as the National Heritage Day in China.

Feng Jicai’s voice mainly focuses on two urgent national issues: One is regarding the ideal in construction of modern cities in China. He raised his big concern about preserving ancient cities’ history, architecture, and landscapes in the new construction process. He sharply criticizes unconscious actions caused serious destruction to numerous valuable historical cities in recent decades during the large national movement of removing the old city and constructing the new city, since the 1990s. He laments that modern Chinese cities have lost their past, their history, and their particular features, and they have been becoming one style and one face. Another target he has spoken out urgently for is preserving ancient rural villages. He points out that the urbanization process in the course of modernization has destroyed numerous valuable
ancient villages, so if we do not seriously take measures to preserve these ancient villages, the historic materials and memories of our agricultural civilization will quickly disappear from our sight. Thus, he tirelessly makes public proclamations via various channels and on various occasions, from government conferences to media, to delivery his proposals for the protection and preservation of historic cultures of China. In addition, he also submitted a series of proposals to the Central Government of China on issues such as preserving ancient villages, establishing township/village museums, and cautious actions for preserving rural cultural heritage in the wave of nation-wide new countryside construction projects.

In his article “The Ancient Historic Village is the Largest Cultural Heritage,” written for a conference on the theme of the Ancient Historic Village in April 2006, Feng Jicai indicates that there are three thousand to five thousand ancient historic villages in China. In the agricultural era, each village was a basic social unit and a cultural container, which held rich tangible and intangible cultural heritage. The root of Chinese culture and the diversity of Chinese culture are in the countryside. The scope for preservation is not set for all villages, but for selected villages that have historical cultural value and regional cultural characteristics. Preserving ancient historic villages does not mean denying any reconstruction, but means following the true historic situation rather than falsely remaking it for the purpose of tourism profit. Thus, the key thing is how to reasonably preserve and develop the ancient historic villages. He suggests that the first thing is to locate and sort out the ancient villages. The second thing is to make a scientific preserving and developing plan, which should stress its historic image, cultural uniqueness; to avoid destroying the old and replacing it with the new, to avoid repeating the tragedy of the urban reconstruction movement of the past twenty years. The preserving and developing plan must take the village culture as a whole. It should include folklore preservation, natural
uniqueness protection, and cultural heritage protection, not only considering architecture, facilities, and tourism, but also considering culture and new cultural life constructions (Feng 2007: 59-67).

Since Feng Jicai is a Tianjin native and he has become actively involved in Tianjin cultural preservation actions, it is not unusual for him to visit local villages in Tianjin area, and to leave his signboard at Xijingyu village, which has been placed by the villagers in the most significant location in the village. However, has the cultural preservation process in Xijingyu village been really undertaken as Feng Jicai expects? What role should cultural intellectuals play in the matter of preservation? What are the power relations in preservation and development processes? In the following, I will narrate real stories that happened in Xijingyu to demonstrate the complex situation in Xijingyu and how external and internal forces have exerted efforts in Xijingyu in terms of “tradition,” “vernacular culture,” “preservation,” “development,” and “tourism” through my observations and interviews in the village.

Xijingyu, an Old Historical Cultural Village

Xijingyu village is affiliated with Yuyang zhen (Township), formerly with Chengguan Township, Jixian County. It is in the protected region of the Mesoproterozoic strata section, located at the back of Mt. Fujun, which was called Mt. Kongdong in ancient times. According to Jizhou zhi, Mt. Kongdong is in the north of Jizhou, 2.5 km away, high and steep. On the peak of the mountain, town and outlying scenery all are in sight. The beauty looks like a picture. There was a Rizhao Temple in the older times and later was changed to the Dizang Temple. An old legend said, three thousand years ago, the Chinese ancestor Huangdi visited this mountain to learn the law of nature from the sage Guangchengzi (崆峒山上有府君廟，又名府君山。在州北五里，形势峭峻。登峰一望则边城野景尽在目中，乃附郭之奇观雪后遥瞻，宛若图画。旧有日照
寺，后改为地藏殿。昔传黄帝问道于广成子之处。”) (Shen 1968 [1831]: 249). According to a village saying, the village has over three hundred years of history that could be traced from the old graves in the area. It is also said that the oldest generation of this village includes a defending general at the Great Wall in the late Ming Dynasty. His name is Zhou Yuji. Thus, today most villagers in Xijingyu have the common surname Zhou from a common ancestor.

Xijingyu village presently has about 180 households and a population of seven hundred. Because of its particular geographic feature in the mountain terrain, the Proterozoic stone geologic environment permitted local peasants to be free from traditional farming model. Crops still relied on the weather conditions. Wheat cannot grow up there because of the shallow soil on the surface and hard stones underneath, as well as lack of water irrigation. The village’s main agriculture products were corn, millet, sorghum, and fruit trees, which were planted in narrow terraced fields around the mountain. The local fruits include pear, persimmon, chestnut, and walnut. In addition, the mountain terrain and the narrow terraced fields also forced villagers to use modern agricultural machine like tractors in farming work. They had to use traditional farm tools such as a sickles, hoes, spades, baskets, and back carriers to cultivate and harvest crops and
fruits. The donkey and horse are still significantly used in the field and village settlements for farm work and transportation. From these aspects, Xijingyu village is still alive in a traditional agriculture world nowadays, and so some old life patterns have been retained.

Xijingyu at the Crossroads of Traditional and Modern

In the course of the modernization of China, the rapid changes to urban and rural landscapes caused such simple and old villages to become rare in contemporary China. Thus, Xijingyu becomes a model of traditional rural life in the eyes of urban and foreign visitors, and has encountered external forces. A poster titled “Xijingyu Village’s Introduction,” which was displayed in the show windows on the wall of the Xijingyu Village Committee Center, narrates what has happened in Xijingyu village in recent decades (note: translated by author).

The uniqueness of Xijingyu village is that, although it is just one mountain away from the busy modern world on the other side, the small village Xijingyu retains its whole stone streets, stone alleys, stone houses, and stone courtyards. It has a kind of old life style! The villagers who live in the village still enjoy a quiet and peaceful farming life. Several years ago, several photographers from Tianjin city accidentally found this “shi wai tao yuan” (世外桃源 land of eternal peace far from the madding crowd), and they were attracted by its particular natural and cultural spectacle. They started to come frequently. Tourists from Beijing and Tianjin also started to come to visit this small village. In 2005, the Jixian Yuyang township government decided to develop Xijingyu as a photographic village. This news spread out and attracted many famous photographers to the village, including the leader of the Chinese Photography Association, Xie Hailong. Xie proposed to further dig into local folklore resources and to strengthen the cultural color of this photographic village. A Xijingyu Folklore Photography Competition was also held in Xijingyu. Since then, the title Xijingyu Folklore Photography Village has appeared.

After carefully discussion, a village developing plan came out centering on the old stone houses and local folk cultures. The plan includes five scenes, ten traditional craft workshops, and thirty farmhouse courtyards. The village will be used as a photographic production base. Yuyang Township invested eight hundred thousand yuan to fund this project. In just half a year, the project was basically completed. The village caused widespread attention. China’s cultural minster, Gao Zhanxiang, and the famous writer Feng Jicai offered inscriptions of the title of the village. The UN officers came to observe the village twice. China Central TV and Tianjin TV produced the video films for the Xijingyu folklore photography village…”
This post reveals that outside forces influenced Xijingyu village to escalate it from a simple, old village to an artistic destination, and established its collaboration with artists and the local government as a “cultural shot” site. The village committee also made a plan to utilize Xijingyu’s particular historic cultural resources and natural landscape to develop “wu jing, shi fang, san shi yuan” (五景十坊三十院 five scenes, ten workshops, and thirty farmer’s guesthouses).

In a brochure I collected at the Xijingyu village office, there is a detailed explanation of the construction project. The five scenes are: chuan yun wan tiao (穿云晚眺 see the cloud with the setting sun), wan juan shi shu (万卷石书 ten thousand stone books), shi tou guang chang (石头广场 stone square with the old well, old mill, and Chairman Mao’s words from the 1960s), Taibai xian ju (太白仙居 relics of the Tang dynasty poet Li Bai [701-762]), nong sang cang guan (农桑蚕馆 farm products museum). The ten workshops are puppetry, weaving, sewing, pottery, stone art, the old mill, the bean curd mill, dry vegetables, the flour mill and skilled men workshop,. The thirty courtyards refer to thirty farmer’s guesthouses.
The project was completed. In addition, the village committee courtyard was newly built with stone material and the Xijingyu folklore photography exhibition room was put in it. Outside the courtyard, an artificial old tree was set on the village square with a bell hung on its branches to symbolize the long history of the village. Several pavilions with wooden benches were newly built in several different places in the villages. Tall wooden gates were installed at the east entry and the west entry of the village. These constructions obviously show the intention to enhance the cultural look of the village and decorate the village like a rural park. However, do these constructions correspond to the ideal of preserving ancient historic villages? What is the real situation in manipulating cultural traditions in Xijingyu village? What is the fate for those naturally retaining old traditions in the process of the new development of the village? How do the old traditions, the manipulated traditions, and the modern lives coexist in contemporary Xijingyu village? What are Xijingyu people’s concerns and struggles in their real life situations and their fames?

In my observation, Xijingyu village actually was not a utopia separate from the rest of world. Everything is undergoing change through collision with the outside world. For instance, the houses in the village are a mixture of several different styles from different times rather than just one type of the old stone house. There were very old stone houses built with full yellow-white stonewalls and dark grey tile roofs. Some older villagers still lived in this type house; there were also artificial stone houses that were built recent years. The inner material is brick, but the outer layer of the walls used pieces of stone to look like a stone house, such as the new built Ming chengbao guesthouse (the Ming castle style houses) and the village committee office buildings in the village. There were also a number of newer brick houses pasted with white tiles
on the surface of walls and red tiles covering on the roof. Most middle-age villagers and those with farmer’s guesthouses own this type of house.

Figure 6.14 Xijingyu village at the crossroads of traditional and modern. Photo by author, 2011.

I also observed the villagers’ daily lives. The children of the village went to school in Jixian town. Villagers went shopping for goods in town. Although the traditional donkey cart was still used by the villagers, modern modes of transportation such as bicycles, motorcycles, and even cars were more common. Since 1998, China’s government has sponsored a national wide huge project in rural areas called “guang bo dian shi cun cun tong” (making broadcast and TV programs available in all rural villages). In recent years, a new project, “popularizing broadband in the rural” has also been undertaken. Thus, in Xijingyu, every household owned one or more televisions. Cell phones were commonly used by either older or younger villagers, and computers have also entered some farmer households. Thus, the old life and modern stuff actually have been coexisting in this historic cultural village. How do Xijingyu people, with different ages, life, and working experiences, respond to the present situation and make their personal life?
Traditional Homes

Nowadays in rural China it is a common phenomenon that old people and small children stay at home while strong laborers, from youth to middle-age, leave the countryside to find a temporary job in a city or town; it is called “nong min gong jin cheng.” In Xijingyu, it is in the same situation, so during my visits to the place, I often met with old people who stayed in the village and sat on the street to chat with each other. I became close with an old couple—Zhou Changyou, who is seventy-eight years old, and his wife Qiu Yuzhi, eighty-one years old—who are kind and simple villagers. From them I witnessed the kind of traditional human relationship that we may only encounter in a rural mountain village.

When I first time visited Xijingyu, I met Zhou Changyou in the street. At that moment, a young woman in the village was going to ride a motorcycle to take her little girl to see a doctor in Jixian town because the girl was sick. But her motor bike could not start, and her girl was crying on her back, so I went over to offer help. Zhou Changyou was by chance in the same place. After the woman finally started her motorbike and left, Zhou Changyou invited me to his house to have a cup of tea. His house is a pure, local, traditional house. Zhou Changyou told me that the house was built forty-eight years ago. The walls of the house and the courtyard both were made of stone material. Some dry wood and corn stalks were neatly piled on the ground on the one side, and the dry corn on the other side. A walnut tree and a small stone toilet shed were at the east end of the yard. In the north of the yard, a row of houses stood toward south with red tile roofs and two large, checked, wooden windows.

When Zhou loudly called, “A guest is coming!” his wife Qiu Yuzhi came out from the house. She was cooking the lunch meal. She warmly invited me to enter their house. Inside the house, there were three rooms laid out in the common plan of the local old farmer houses. The
entrance room in the middle served as a kitchen and dining place. There were two doors front and back in this room. A big traditional mud stove at the corner of the south wall was still used with firewood and coal for cooking. Smoke had made the wall very dark. A handmade old wooden cabinet was in the corner for putting bowls, plates and some leftover food. There was still no fridge in this home. A folding wooden dining table and a few wooden stools were in the room as the dining place. The other two rooms to the east side and the west side were separated by a curtain hanged on the door of each room. Both rooms had a traditional brick kang (bed) against the south windows. The east room was used as the main bedroom because the stove in the kitchen had an inner chimney to deliver heat to the kang when cooking. The west room was mainly a storage room. The east room had a row of old style wooden cabinets about one meter high against the north wall. This kind of cabinet, commonly seen in the countryside of North China, is usually used as a large container and its flat top can be used as a long table. In this home, a TV and some teacups were placed on the cabinet. I heard that Zhou Changyou was a carpenter in the past, so these old pieces of furniture were made by him. I noticed there was an iron stove in the room. Qiu Yuzhi told me the iron stove was used during the winter for heat. This old style house had also updated some new things. A few pieces of metal heater had been installed around the wall of the kang. The checked wooden windows were kept in the old pattern, but the paper material on the checks was replaced with plastic because the plastic material is durable.

The hostess Qiu Yuzhi was making steamed stuffed buns in a big iron pan on the cooking stove. When the food was ready, Qiu Yuzhi offered me a taste of her food. Although the old couple lived in a very simple home, their food was pretty good. The bun stuff was made with ground meat and vegetable and was delicious. They put on the dining table a plate of cooked
chicken, a bowl of boiled peanuts, cans of beer, and the popular lulu beverage. While enjoying their eating and drinking, they claimed how good their lives are now. Qiu Yuzhi told me that Zhou Changyou was her second husband. She came to Xijingyu village when she married to her first husband at eighteen years old. Her first husband passed away twenty-six years ago, and she remarried Mr. Zhou fourteen years ago. She had four daughters and three sons. From a traditional idea, her children did not agree her remarriage to Zhou Changyou. Qiu showed her strong will on this matter and even claimed that her new marriage would be protected under the new law. Finally, her children accepted her marriage. Although they have many children, they all lived in their own house independently after marriage. They often came over to bring some food to the old couple. Qiu Yuzhi said they had enough food. They also watched TV every day, so they knew what was happening in the outside world. In their daily life, the old lady Qiu stayed at home making meals while the old man Zhou went to field to take care of their two mu of land. He planted some irregular crops such as sesame, peanuts, sweet potatoes, millet, and red beans. From this point, the gender role in this home remains in a traditional manner. For general grain and goods, they just bought them from stores in town.

Figure 6.15 Zhou Changyou and Qiu Yuzhi’s home. Photo by author, 2011.
The old couple’s optimistic attitude toward their life was really impressive to me. When I asked if they wanted to move to an apartment building to live, they both replied that they liked living in this old house. Qiu Yuzhi said, “Don’t make me move. I do not want to leave this old house. I like the *kang* bed. My younger daughter runs a farmer’s guesthouse. They changed to the soft beds. When I went to her home, she let me sleep on a soft bed, but I just couldn’t sleep well on the soft bed, so I only stayed a few days in her home, then I had to come back to stay at my old house.” I believe Qiu Yuzhi’s words were sincere, not a false statement. It implies that for local people, what they want to keep or want to change, different people have different sentiments that are determined by their personal life experience.

In the village, aside for Zhou Changyou and Qiu Yuzhi, I also heard a similar attitude from other old people. Ding Yu is an eighty-one-year-old man. I chatted with him while he drove his donkey cart and used a spade to dig earth on the side of a mountain road. Ding Yu told me that his stone house was built about sixty years ago. He has three daughters and two sons. They all left the village and work in Jixian town or Tianjin. Only the old couple still lived in the village. Below is a transcript of the conversation between him and me:

**Q:** Whenever you visit your daughters or sons, do you like to live there?

**A:** I do not like it. My youngest daughter graduated from a college and lives on the sixth floor in a building in Tianjin. When I visited there, I really did not like it. I live in a big yard, a lot of freedom. My house has five front rooms, two side rooms, and in the yard, we have a pigsty and a donkey shed. I have a TV. I can do whatever I like. In the city, there are only apartments. If I lived in an apartment building, I would lose the freedom.

**Q:** Did your house build by yourself? Do you use a *kang* and fire stove?
A: Yes, my house has been here more than sixty years. We have never changed; we still use the big fire stove and the *kang*. We still use cooking woods to cook. When the weather is cold, we use the coal stove to keep warm.

Q: When your children came back to stay in your old stone house, were they accustomed to the old house?

A: My daughter came back to live for a few days, but for my sons, they just eat dinner and then leave since they live in Jixian town, not far away.

Figure 6.16 A hundred-year-old stone house in Xijingyu village. Photo by author, 2011.

I found that his response to the traditional life was similar to that of the couple of Zhou Changyou. Sometimes when I walked to the village, I often met three old villagers, one man and two women. They walked together to a higher point at the west of the village and sat down there to view their village as well the Mt. Fujun scenery. One day, they chatted about the village affairs, and I coincidently sat nearby. The old man said, “It is said there were sixty-one villages selected as famous historic cultural villages in the nation. In Tianjin region, only Xijingyu village was selected.” Another woman said, “Are there any benefits to having this title? Do we need to *chai qian* (remove the old house) and move to an apartment building or a villa? I do not want to
live in a villa, like the one in Maojiayu village. Bald yard, nothing can be planted! I still like to
live in my old house. The flat house is good for old people, and we also can plant what we
want.” This conversation also shows that these old people want to keep their old house not only
because of their emotional connection to the place they have lived in, but also because they see
the merits of the things they hold.

Regarding the house tradition and changes in Xijingyu village, I interviewed Zhou
Zhanfa, a middle-age leader of the village, on October 10, 2011.

Q: What is the house situation in the village?

A: There are fewer than fifty of the old style stone houses in the village, about one-
fourth. Almost all old people live with this type of house. When their children grow up to the
marriage age, since other households use brick house, it pushes you to think to do in the same
way. Since the 1990s, the house construction has become more popular to use bricks instead
of stones. Young people like the brick-built house and wooden floor. The stone made house
is cool in the summer, but it is cold in the winter. Since stone-made walls have holes and
seams, they have to be sealed carefully with cement.
Q: As the Xijingyu tradition features stone culture and the local government also wants the village to keep the tradition of the stone house, how do you coordinate the old and new house patterns?

A: It is difficult to deal with this matter. Sometimes we asked villagers not to demolish the old house, but it did not work. The upper-level leaders want villagers still to use small tiles for the roof to maintain the old style, but the small grey dark tile is heavier than the new large red tile because it is plastered with thick mud. Now the new house is wider than the old house, so it is a problem. In addition, the stone material costs more than the brick material. A cart of stones costs two hundred yuan. People using stones to build house need to spend more working hours and more money because it needs to be piled up from two sides. The brick wall just needs to be piled up from one side. So the villagers do not accept to build stone house now.

Q: How do you deal with this contradiction?

A: As a result, we have used the way that we use bricks for the inside wall and use a thin layer of stone for the outside surface, although the price for a piece of stone is higher than for a piece of ceramic. Actually, it is not good using stones to pile the house wall. In the rainy season, water could slowly soak through the stone seams to inside walls. Thus, using a thin stone layer to cover brick material is a better way for updating housing while maintaining the traditional appearance. Last time, the township leaders asked me to let villagers use stone material to build houses, but I replied them that who would like to use stone material to build house wall now? Tourists like to see the stone house, but we do not like to see them. Anyway, the villagers do not want to accept this requirement. Building a stone house costs thirty thousand yuan, and needs to plaster lime four or five times to make
the wall smooth. But for the brick wall, it is easy to make it smooth. Similarly, if you let the villagers change red tiles to traditional dark grey tiles for the house roof, you need to provide money to support the renovation. It does not work if you rely on villagers personal spending. Anyway, many difficult things need to be dealt with.

Different responses to the traditional stone house indicate that even in a small village, due to diverse ages and life experiences, villagers hold different attitudes toward the issue. Generally, the old people who lived in the stone houses still wanted to stay in their old houses. Definitely, the stone house has its drawbacks compared to the houses built with the new material, but the old people still tried to find various good reasons why they wanted to live in the old house. This is a complex matter involving emotion, utility and economic matters. From economic concerns, old people normally economize and do not want to spend money on housing for themselves, even when the old stone house is in a relative poor condition. For the middle age or young people who accept modern consumption ideas, from a practical, comfortable, or fashionable viewpoint, they like the brick-made new house style. Thus, when maintaining the old house style does not fit the desire for everyone in the village, when cultural elites and government officers urge the village to maintain the old house tradition, how should Xijingyu villagers deal with this matter? Should they go against their desire to maintain the honorable title they were endowed by the government? Should they accept the plan someone designed for them? Or should they have right to choose their life style on their own? Xijingyu villagers face a series of contradictions in the social change and modernization process.

In fact, there are no simple ways to overcome these contradictions subjectively or objectively. We have heard some voices from international communities on the issue. To reduce potential conflicts between tourists and the host community, Aas suggests, “It engages all
interested parties in the decision-making process by allowing them to take responsibility, enhance their self-reliance, and their own awareness of the issues (Aas 2005: 31, cited Medeiros de Araujo and Bramwell 1999). However, participation works differently in varying cultural and political contexts (Aas 2005: 42 cite Stolton and Dudley 1999). In the context of developing countries, there are operational, structural, and cultural limits to community participation (Tosun 2000). In China, the situation commonly shows participation when it benefits by stakeholders rather than participation in decision-making. The role of communities, governments, and external capital, and developmental and operational patterns can eventually be summarized as the representations of their power relations which are determined by the actual possession of the right under the general framework of a communal approach (Ying and Zhou 2007: 105-106). In the Xijingyu case, if I use the concept “a communal approach” to interpret the power relations, I see that individual villagers and the village committee cooperate in the operation of the project but not in making decision, which obscures whether or not an individual villager’s desire could be respected, whether or not the decision could fit to local situation well, and whether or not the development can avoid destructive results and balance each party’s right.

**Traditional Crafts Workshops**

Throughout history, in a self-sufficient agricultural society model, there were many kinds of craft workshops in Xijingyu that supplied various services for local villagers’ daily needs. The old lady Qiu Yuzhi who had lived in the village about sixty-three years told me, “In the past there were various workshops in the village. The flourishing years for these shops were in the 1950s. A mill, a noodle shop, a sewing shop, a puppet shop, a weave shop…in the 1980s, since bao chan dao hu, all the workshop properties were distributed to individual households. At the beginning, people still ran them, but later they could not earn money from the shops, so these
shops were closed. Several years ago, the workshops were reopened, but they were not run well. The reason is that now people do what can to earn money. If the shops cannot earn money, they cannot survive! Xijngyu already had puppet shop in the 1940s. During that time, from the fall harvest season to the New Year season, there were a lot of shows. A few years ago, the workshops were restored, but they closed again.” Qiu Yuzhi’s words disclose some divergence between the blueprint of Xijingyu village that was advocated and advertised on various occasions I had seen, from the pamphlet to the website information provided by Jixian Travel Bureau, and the actual situation of implementing the plan for recovering and reconstructing traditional culture in the village.

What is the real situation for these traditional workshops in the village? During my stay in the village, I still saw a few shops’ signs hung in the village, including the grass weaving shop, the puppet shop, and the old mill shop, but they were just a shop-sign and did not actually operate. I visited the home of the grass weaving shop and learned that the weaving shop has been closed for two years. The woman in this household managed the weaving shop when the village was spurred to restore traditional workshops. However, since the products did not earn a good profit, she could not continue to run this shop. The woman now was working in the kitchen of the Ming chengbao, a village guest hostel invested by the Jixian Travel Bureau in Xijingyu village. This means that working such a job can earn more than running the weaving shop. On the situation of the old mill, as Qiu Yuzhi told me, now they usually buy flour or rice from Jixian town or send grain to a machine shop for processing, so this old way for processing grain at the mill was out of date and just occasionally used for processing a small amount coarse grain for livestock.5
In my interview with the village leader, Zhou Zhanfa, he further explained to me the situation of the farmer workshops in the village. Zhou said that in 2005, as the village launched a cultural tourism project, the traditional workshops were recovered: puppetry, weaving, sewing, pottery, stone art, the old mill, the bean curd mill, dry vegetables, the noodle shop. They were all transmitted from the old generations. However, they failed after running for two years because they were too slow to earn money. The stone shop’s items normally cost several hundred RMB for each, so people looked at them, but did not buy them. Another reason is that owners went out to work, so buyers could not find them. When the shop owners stayed at home to wait for buyers, maybe no buyers come. If they could earn hundred yuan a day, they might still do it, but actually, they could not. So to recover these old workshops is a difficult thing. The sewing shop still existed, but it was slow too. If the prices were lower, the owner of the shop could not earn any. If the price was set high, nobody bought anything. Thus, the woman who ran the sewing shop is also going to close down. The puppet shop was run by two brothers. They had a job watching the TV tower on Mt. Fujun. Thus, the puppet shop just casually ran for a show by requests. The village committee wanted to support these shops, but lacked money.

These accounts imply that whether traditional cultures can survive or not mainly depends on a certain economic pattern of a society and the social needs of this society. In a traditional, self-sufficient, small, agricultural society, people’s daily lives relied on these local workshops. In a market economy, trade and consumption are conducted in a large exchange system of economy and market. For Xijingyu village, although the limitation of the geographic condition still causes villagers to use traditional farming tools in the hilly fields, the villagers have actually participated in the market economy. Their consumption pattern and behavior have changed. Since the village is very close to Jixian town, villagers can buy everything they need from stores.
in town and consume goods from the world. Thus, to recover old traditions, if only to copy old ones that served the community in the past without updated them to meet with modern consuming pattern and the modern market need, the old traditional products will lack consumers and economic returns, thus lacking the dynamics necessary to survive in the real world. They can only appear to display functions of the past but cannot be alive in contemporary daily life.

At this point, it could problematize Feng Jicai’s major argument that the value of historic culture and preservation of the ancient historic village should be in its original status (yuan zhi yuan wei 原汁原味). Changing and upgrading can ruin the value of cultural heritage. He uses words “rough” (粗鄙) and “vulgar” (庸俗) to comment on the tourism products in remaking and recovering traditions. He negates the influence of economy on culture and asserts that commercialization corrupts culture (Feng 2007: 221). However, the Xijingyu village case shows that the survival of traditions must have adequate support to meet social needs and economic foundation. The puppet show workshop in Xijingyu village provides an example.

**Zhou Jiguang’s Puppet Show House**

The puppet show (皮影戏) was one of traditional activities in the past in the village and was highlighted in the villager’s traditional cultural preservation and tourism development plan. From the village’s tour brochure, from the Xijingyu folklore photograph exhibition room, from the display window on the wall of the village committee, I impressed on the pictures of the traditional puppet show performed by the villager Zhou Jiguang. These pictures show that puppet show has been treated as a notable traditional cultural item for Xijingyu village. Xijingyu’s honorable guests have been brought to watch the local puppet show during their visits to Xijingyu, such as filmmakers and officers from the United Nations. Zhou Jiguang’s puppet home
has functioned as a museum-like displaying place for the traditional puppet; it has also been a shooting location for a film shot and a cultural sign.

In order to learn more about the real situation of the puppet show house and the performer Zhou Jiguang, I planned to interview Zhou Jiguang. However, it was not easy to meet him in the puppet house in the village. The villagers directed me to the location of the puppet show home; however, the first several times I went there, I found the gate to be locked. Thus, I could only observe the puppet house from the outside of the yard. Mr. Zhou’s puppet house had an old-style courtyard with a pavilion gate with a door of two wooden leaves. Two large, faded red lanterns were hung on each side of the gate. The antithetical couplet pasted on the door looked quite old. This delivered me a message that the host of the puppet home was not often there. The villagers told me that Zhou Jiguang was not living in this puppet show home. He and his brother occupied a house on the other side of the street. Most of the time, the brothers were on Mt. Fujun to watch the local TV tower. Thus, if I want to find him, I had to go to the top of Mt. Fujun. I climbed up Mt. Fujun, and in a small room at the peak of the mount beside the TV Tower, I found this legendary puppet show heir Zhou Jiguang and learned stories about him and his puppet show house.

Zhou Jiguang was sixty-five years old in the year 2011. He and his younger brother Zhou Jizheng both were bachelors. In most of time, they stayed in the workstation on Mt. Fujun and went down to the village just to get meals twice a day. Zhou Jiguang told me that his grandfather liked *shuo shu* (说书, a kind of narrative performing art) and often did for his grandmother. His father Zhou Weiming liked to watch and play puppets and followed a puppet show team to play. During the 1950s and 1960s, the puppet show normally was held in village during leisure farming seasons such as the Chinese New Year. At that time, every village had a puppet show
that ran for four to eight nights. His father was a good player. He did not learn puppet from his father, but he often watched shows in his childhood. He had a very good memory. Some large traditional historical operas such as *Shi Gong An* (施公案), he can recite from memory. Thus, although he had never formally learned singing and puppetry, through listening and watching, gradually he could do it. He actually did not formally perform the puppet in the past, just played for fun for himself.

![Figure 6.18 Zhou Jiguang’s puppet house in Xijingyu. Photo by author, 2011.](image)

In 2004, when Xijingyu village launched its folklore tourism project, his father had already passed away. The village committee offered him to restore the puppet workshop as one of the ten traditional village workshops, so he purchased the puppet properties and united with six other villagers, including his young brother Zhou Jizheng, to form a puppet troupe. At that time, the village committee provided him with a subsidy for purchasing props. Jixian County and the township leaders also showed their support. However, there was actually no audience in the village. Young people were no longer interested in this kind of play. They are interested in watching TV and playing games. The elders also like to watch TV programs or play *majiang* (mah-jongg) game at home. Even if some elders in the village might watch his show, he would
not able to charge a fee to them for his amateur performance. Thus, the puppet group members were not able to earn a living from puppetry. Gradually, the puppet group dispersed. Zhou retained the puppet workshop in his house just as a display to show outsiders this old tradition on some special occasions. On the other hand, although the puppets are not successful enough to continue, this experience, however, has affected to Zhou Jiguang’s personal life. He was excited that running this puppet shop made him a local famous person and connected him with outside world.

![Figure 6.19 A picture of Zhou Jiguang with visiting UN officers. Photo by author, 2011.](image)

Since the village has the title of “Folklore Photography Village,” some organizations or famous Chinese artists have come to visit Xijingyu village. Zhou’s puppet home was often used as a traditional art workshop and piece of cultural heritage to show to outside visitors. This situation provided him with some opportunities to get in touch with many people and made special experiences for him. He was proud of talking about them with great relish. He talked about how he performed a puppet show for officers from the United Nations. He talked about how two students from Denmark came to his home to learn to play puppet from him for one day. He also talked about how newspaper reporters from Tianjin and Beijing came to interview him,
how local celebrities such as famous Pingju actress Yi Chunying gave him an album, and the novelist Song Kun gave him his newly published novel. Thus, the puppet home made things different from his past and made him different from an ordinary villager. In addition, this place was also occasionally used to shoot a film and he could get a little bit of payment from filmmakers. Recovering the puppet workshop actually did not restore the original function of puppet shows in daily life, but developed new functions in the contemporary social context and served contemporary social purposes. The transcript below from audio recording of my interview with Zhou Jiguang reveals this situation.

Q: How many shows you have done?

A: I recorded them in my notebook (He took out a small notebook from under his pillow). Whenever the village leader asked me to put on a show, I went to do the show. The puppet show house was launched on April 23, 2005. The village secretary and the head of the township came to watch the show. Reporters often come to interview me. This summer a film company came to Xijingyu to make the film Kai xin ba yue (Happy August). The film’s story is about a family that has family tradition of playing puppets. The father wanted his kid Kaixin to learn puppetry too, but Kaixin does not want to learn. His father was annoyed. Finally, Kaixin learned about it. Just such a story, I played with them half a day. I did it in the background. The actor showed up in the front. But the actor did not know how to sing, so I sang behind the scenes. It was just shot this August.

Q: When did you play puppets? Was it in the holiday season?

A: No, when visitors came to the village, such as some organizations or some government departments, I performed for them. Normally they are from cultural sectors, literary people.
Q: Did you receive any income?

A: We got a little bit in performance fees, around forty yuan. I am hesitant to mention money matters. It is ok either giving money or not. Anyway, no people watch it nowadays.

Q: Except for showing for outsiders, have you ever played a show for your own villagers?

A: Honestly, I have put on puppet shows for our villagers. I got them to view the show, but if I do a traditional historical opera from my repertoire, nobody likes it. Nowadays we have to play funny short shows to make people laugh.

Q: When you performed for outside visitors, did you play a funny short show or a long historical opera from the traditional repertoire?

A: What we play depends on guests’ wishes. The people who came to my place mostly were shooting a film or taking photos. Whatever they need me to sing, I sing it. So, the props needed to change a lot according to what was being performed.

Q: Did you make something on your own for the puppet show?

A: Yes, Mr. Zhang from Chengguan Township and I wrote a play. The title is *A Family Disturbance*. The story of this play is about that an old couple who has a son and a daughter. They want to send their son to a college, but they do not want their daughter do the same. They valued a son more than a daughter. Finally, they let them both attend colleges. This modern play uses modern props. The stuff is still in my puppet house. I sang this play to the officer of the International Children Organization. His name is Andelu (sound translation from Andrew). This show was arranged by the Jixian government.

Q: Do you still remember the arias as well as the scripts of old plays?
A: I remembered them. But now I am afraid that I cannot remember. I have no occasions to perform them either in the county or in our village. I just show them to the outside visitors occasionally.

This conversation shows that the efforts of recovering a traditional program through cultural tourism actually cannot revive the original. The changes of social setting, social environment, and audience expectations have inevitably caused the old tradition to change into the current situation. Thus, authenticity of tradition can only be understood as a process of real form rather than a static original form.

When Zhou Jiguang opened his old puppet house to show me inside, I was convinced of my argument. According to Zhou Jiguang, this puppet house is hundred years old, a heritage from his great-grandmother. It was built in the early twentieth century. During the Sino-Japanese war, when the Japanese army destroyed most of the houses in Xijingyu village, this old house fortunately escaped the disaster due to his grandmother’s brave protection of her house. When I entered the yard, the unchanged old house presented its old historic face. Since nobody actually lived in this house on normal days, the walls, windows, doors and dark grey roof were all in very poor condition. There were three rooms in the house. Like the common local house plans, the hall room in the middle had a big earth-cooking stove with thick dust on it. A difference from Zhou Changyou’s old house was that there was not a kang bed in the west room. In fact, the room had been refurnished as a puppet show room with various puppet properties.

At the center of this room, there was a wooden table. On the table, there was a two-meter long and one-meter high white clothing screen for playing puppets. Zhou Jiguang’s play manuscript *A Family Disturbance* was placed on the table. Against the wall, there were various puppets and models on the board of a red cabinet. Zhou Jiguang said that these puppet models
were made new out of donkey skin. He bought the donkey skin and found a skilled craftsman to sew the patterns and figures. The old puppet models left from the past were just made of paper. The paper-made is cheaper, but it is easily broken. On the wall, Zhou Jiguang pasted some of his puppet show pictures and some important visitors’ commemoration words. His pride in these experiences could be perceived. Zhou Jiguang also told me that an old wooden puppet box in the room was a prop given to him from a film producer. It was used in a film. The film group also gave to him four hundred yuan as payment for using his old puppet house. Not only these, he also let me get into his east room. There was a kang in this room where stored his odds and ends. From there he got out pictures and books to show me, which visitors had given to him. He specially showed me a photo taken of him and the puppet students, the two Danish girls.

For Zhou Jiguang, although puppet shows could not support his daily life, serving only as a traditional cultural scene in Xijingyu village, the puppet show home had been a way to connect him with the outside world and made him proud of his life. Although he had such an old simple house, he was still satisfied with the respect he earned and the value placed on his work. This puppet house itself shows the passing of time. There was the original old house and materials. There were recent puppet models. There were also new pictures and inscriptions. Moreover, the function of this puppet house has been transformed from an entertainment venue for local villagers to a place for showing puppets to outside visitors. Puppet performer Zhou Jiguang’s expectations for maintaining this puppet house has changed from playing for local villagers to playing for film producers as a cultural novelty. Thus, because of the progress of time and social changes, although in the same space, the old culture cannot be maintained with its original status and functions.
The Future: a New Plan for Preserving Xijingyu Village

On March 8, 2011, on the poster board of the Jixian Planning Bureau, a group of posts caused my attention. The subject of the post is Tianjin shi Jixian Yuyang zhen Xijingyu cun li shi wen hua bao hu gui hua (天津市蓟县渔阳镇西井峪村历史文化保护规划 Xijingyu Village’s Historic and Cultural Preservation Plan). The plan was co-designed by the City Planning and Designing Institution of Tianjin University and the Jixian Planning Bureau. It was posted in public for thirty days to get feedback. The post includes five diagrams with some explanation texts attached. Blow is an excerpt of the translated texts.

Figure 6.20 Xijingyu Historic and Cultural Preservation Plan. Photo by author, 2011.

Figure 1 text is about the background of this plan and an outline of geographical and cultural features of Xijingyu village:

In order to strengthen the preservation work on Xijingyu village’s historic and cultural heritage, in 2009, Tianjin City’s Planning Bureau and the Jixian government assigned the relevant institutions to design the preservation plan for Xijingyu village, Yuyang Township, Jixian. Now the first phase of the design has been completed. The scope for this plan is centering on Xijingyu as an ancient historic village, within the territory of the south of Mt. Bobo and the north of Mt. Fujun. The total area of land usage is 303.9 hectares. Following the regular procedures for approving the plan, the summary of the plan is now posted to the public. The posting period is 30 days. Everyone is welcome to give attention to this plan and participate in this process, and give us your sincere feedback. ---Jixian Planning Bureau
Figure 2 text: Preservation Territory Control Diagram. Xijingyu village acreages: 303.9 gong qin (hectares). The core protective area is 13.4 hectares. The figure shows the stoneroller and stonewalls of the village.

Figure 3 text: The land usage plan in the preservation territory.

Land usage layout note:

In order to protect the historical integrity of the village, this plan sets up reserving, repairing, and restoring measures for the historic architecture in the protected area, and it prohibits building new-type houses that are different from historic-style houses in the protective scope. Meanwhile, the plan outlines the land usage in the future village development as the diagram showing: the construction boundary control, a residence area, farming land, a housing area, green land, a public facility area, an activity ground, a parking lot, a water area, a museum area, a town administrative area, road land, and developmental land.

Figure 4 text: General outlook diagram of the preservation area.

The objective of the design: Xijingyu protective area design takes consideration of Xijingyu’s important ecology factors and cultural heritage preservation measures, to accomplish the goals of effective protection and long term sustainable use of the environmental resources and historic cultural heritage, and to facilitate comprehensive cultural construction and social development of Tianjin.

Basic principles: 1) Preserving historical cultural resources follows comprehensive, authentic, and integral principles. It includes the principle to engage in integrity protection of the environment of the heritage, both tangible and intangible cultural heritage preservation. 2) The principles in consideration of protection, innovation, application, and development.

This figure includes a diagram showing the design under the principles. The spots on the diagram are marked as: 1) weaving workshop, 2) pottery workshop, 3) flour mill, 4) old mill, 5) puppet workshop, 6) bean curd shop, 7) dry vegetable shop, 8) public ground, 9) housing, 10) housing, 11) housing, 12) housing.

Figure 5 text: Public service facilities diagram.

The proposed public service facilities in the Xijingyu area include a small supermarket, a health clinic, a tourist reception center, a police office, a village committee office, public toilets, a cultural activity center, a farmer’s market, and a senior care center.

A diagram shows above the proposed facilities.
On March 22, 2011, I conducted a phone interview with Ms. Wang, who is in charge of the inquiry for the ongoing-posted plan. Below is a note from this interview.

Q: When will “the Xijingyu historic cultural preservation plan” be undertaken?
A: It is hard to say right now and we have not determined. Since Xijingyu has been approved as a national-level historic cultural village, the undertaking of this project cannot be solely decided by the Jixian government and the Jixian Planning Bureau. It needs to get an approval from the Construction Ministry of China and the relevant departments.

Q: Who has participated in this designing?
A: It was a collaboration with the Jixian Planning Bureau and the Yuyang Township government.

Q: Do you have a particular project committee constituted of the Jixian government, Jixian Planning Bureau, and the Xijingyu Village Committee?
A: We have not constituted a particular committee for this project. The program is still in the planning stage.

Q: Does this plan also set up developing tourism as an objective while emphasizing preserving the historical cultural village?
A: The outcome of this plan surely will facilitate Jixian and Xijingyu village’s tourism development and make the place a destination of tourists.

Q: How will it treat the old houses in the village? Are they going to be rebuilt?
A: We have taken consideration of the old houses in the village. They are not going to be completely removed. We consider keeping the old ones.

This interview discloses that the preservation project for the historic cultural village Xijingyu is a top-down action and does not have equal participation from each stakeholder party.
Although the principles set for this plan attempt to emphasize preserving the cultural history and cultural heritage of Xijingyu village, the draft of the plan shows that the plan still aims at transforming this historic cultural village into a modernized cultural tourism destination. The objects proposed for preservation in the village are directly related to the purpose of promoting local cultural tourism. The traditional workshops and old houses in the proposed plan serve the function of displaying local traditional culture to tourists rather than resuming the old traditions in daily life. The new construction plans for the public service facilities obviously attempt to improve local villagers’ life quality and provide tourists with modern facilities. Thus, even though this plan was guided by recent national policies for the preservation of ancient historic villages and tangible and intangible cultural heritage, the preservation plan for this particular historic cultural village actually cannot get rid of modern models and contemporary social needs. With this plan, the historic elements of the old village will be integrated into local modern construction.

Another announcement posted on the website of Jixian Travel Bureau in 2013 demonstrates this point. The title of this post is “Xijingyu Historic Cultural Village Protection Project” (Xijingyu li shi wen hua ming cun bao hu she jian she xiang mu 西井峪历史文化名村保护设施建设项目). The purpose of this announcement is to raise the capital investment of the project. In the announcement, it reads that the total estimated capital investment would be three hundred million yuan, and the estimated returns would be one hundred million yuan per year. The construction area is 303.06 hectares. The land used for construction is 7500 m². The construction content includes repairing eighty-three old dwellings, constructing a 19,800 m² square, installing road signs, and tour marks, constructing 3600 m² parking lots, and restoring old craft workshops such as the weaving shop, the sewing shop, the stone mill shop, and so on.6
This announcement implies that the preservation actions in ancient historic village Xijingyu have moved forward from the planning phrase to the funding raising phrase. Although the project was described as an “historic cultural protection” (历史文化保护) and the nature of the project as “restoration and protection” (修缮保护), the sponsor for this project was not a cultural department but the Jixian Travel Bureau. The whole project has been actually planned with a tourism model. Some purposed constructions are even irrelevant to preserving old local cultures, such as a plan to construct a large 3600 m² parking lot. Thus, the case illustrates again that in the national wave of economic development and modernization processes, the preservation program has been mixed with local tourism development plans.

The relationship of heritage preservation and tourism development is the relationship of culture and economy. Scholars have presented differing viewpoints. Feng Jicai criticizes economic tourism that ruins the authentic value of cultural objects. On the other hand, he also admits that those making plans for the protection of ancient historic villages need to consider to construct new cultural life, including modern cultural facilities and tourism development (Feng 2007: 67). He generalizes several models in contemporary China in preserving local ancient historic villages: 1) dividing areas: Respectively maintain the old area and construct a new area. An example is Suhe in Lijiang. 2) Museumize: Accumulate typical old houses in one place for display. An example is Jinzhong courtyard in Shanxi. 3) Living status: Villages stay in their original form and make modern things invisible. An example is Xitang in Zhejiang. 4) Landscape type: The outside of the house is kept in its traditional style and the inside of the house is installed with modern facilities. An example is Wuyuan in Jiangxi. 5) Scenic spot type: Restoration meets with tourism needs. An example is Wu Zhen (Feng 2007: 12). Overall, these types, no matter what strategies and ways they are applied, commonly tend toward the display of
old historic objects to viewers, to serve local tourism. It intends, even Feng Jicai argues, to maintain the cultural value outside of economic corruption, but in practice, culture and economy are bundled together and can no longer be separated from each other in modern society. Preservation and development have been correspondently engaged.

Aas and Ladkin argue that awareness of the importance of heritage resources for tourism is the first step towards providing income for heritage conservation that will benefit all stakeholders. “Given the will of the local community to become involved in the development of heritage tourism, collaboration is likely to take place.” Thus, “the attitudes of the heritage managers with regard to the issues concerning conservation and tourism need to be changed” (Aas 2005: 44). To respond to these arguments and to face the social reality in the specific social context of China, should we shelter cultural objects from economics, or should we find an appropriate way to fit preserving the true value of culture heritage while getting along with the economic and social progress? Xijingyu village’s situation may not belong to any single type if it naturally goes with local villagers’ situations and accommodates villagers’ different desires and needs. However, this is just an assumption. The social institutions and economic markets in China nowadays determine that Xijingyu is no longer an isolated village, and it cannot keep away from the whole social process of Jixian County, Tianjin city, the nation of China, and the rest of the world. The process cannot escape manipulation from developmental schemes since it is entrenched in a hierarchical control model in the particular social context of China. What is the future for Xijingyu in terms of preservation and development? That is still in question.
Chapter 7

Conclusion

In general, with this dissertation work, I have used Jixian as an example to find out the dynamics and conflicts in preserving and inventing cultural traditions along with local tourism development and modernization process in the transformation era of contemporary China. In studying the case of Jixian, I explored the nature and value of tradition, the relationship of tradition and modernity, culture and economy, and the power relations of the state, local agencies, communities, and individual. I have used my field studies to formulate a theoretical model of the processes of tradition in terms of preserving, reconstructing and remaking, and inventing tradition. The conclusion from this study is that tradition and modernity are a single process. Tradition is alive in modern society and integrated into modern construction. Authentic tradition should be viewed as a process through time and space. Economic development and cultural tourism are dynamics in preserving and inventing tradition. In the context of contemporary China, the political power of the state, local agencies and ordinary people respectively plays a significant role in local development and cultural preservation and invention through cooperation, negotiation, and contestation.

In this research, tradition is the key concept and research objective under examination. The theoretical definitions and elaborations on tradition provide a solid ground for me stand on as I explored the connotations of tradition in a particular social context and put this theoretical concept in dialogue with the real cases from my field research. Drawing on Henry Glassie’s view of tradition as “a process of cultural construction” (Glassie 1995: 398) and Richard Bauman’s view of tradition as “the social process by which such continuity is achieved”
(Bauman 2001: 15819), I set up “tradition in process” as the theoretic cornerstone of this dissertation work. I looked at it from its tangled relationships with culture, politics, and economy, from which I elaborated a series of issues on cultural preservation and invention, continuity and transformation, and factors and results in the processes of tradition in the contemporary social environment. Jixian County is a unique place reflecting these issues in this research.

For the whole structure of this work, I tried to combine diachronic and synchronic studies to understand tradition in time and space, rather than in an idle station. On the one hand, I traced Jixian’s historical cultural transformation from its past traditional agricultural culture to its new modern tourism industry and market economy culture from a vertical view through local gazetteers, written records, oral history, cultural relics, ongoing cultural projects, and local daily lives. On the other hand, from a horizontal view, through on site ethnographic observations and interviews in multiple locations of Jixian County, I sketched a profile of tradition in a contemporary social nexus of culture and economy, bearing multiple functions as a cultural object, local identity, life way, cultural capital, and economic vehicle, as a cultural trait applied in local development and modernization construction.

I am delighted to see that Jixian local folks have wisely used their own strategies to negotiate the conflicts between traditional life and modern life. They have been aware that tradition is a treasure for them to use to build today and tomorrow’s life. They creatively pursue various ways to adapt tradition to modern constructions and make tradition reborn as modern tradition. The acts of cultural preservation and invention in Jixian have been incorporated into national and local social and economic developmental plans through the interactions of culture, economics, and politics from the level of state to local communities. Local agencies and ordinary
individuals either are being powerful or restrained in response the central government’s guidelines. In the following, I will review the major theoretical arguments and empirical findings presented in this research work.

**Traditional Culture and Cultural Tradition**

The rhetorical expressions “traditional culture” and “cultural tradition” have been vague in usage. The Chinese cultural scholar Pang Pu has an article addressing the different connotations of “traditional culture” and “cultural tradition.” In his explanation, “traditional culture” refers to materials, institutions, conventions, cultural substances and cultural consciousness that have existed in history. Whereas cultural tradition does not have substances and it cannot be touched, but is embraced in all traditional cultures and all contemporary cultures, cultural tradition is the immortal, collective national spirit (Pang 2003: 9). This explanation distinguishes the two terms as body and soul, material and spirit. Cultural tradition is seen as an abstract form extracted from traditional cultures, and it perpetually exists in a cultural system beyond any time frame.

In this dissertation research, through a concrete ethnographic study on tradition in time and space, I present a vision different from Pang Pu’s of what is traditional culture and what is cultural tradition. This research shows that traditional cultures are related to the cultures in the past materially and consciously, but they can also appear and exist in contemporary times through purposeful display and use. In the situation that traditional cultures are no longer suitable for contemporary social life, they cannot be alive in contemporary social settings, but they can still be displayed and operated as an historical reference. In the event that a traditional culture is selected, adapted, and accepted in a contemporary social setting, the traditional culture upgrades
to a cultural tradition. From this perspective, cultural tradition is not just an immortal spirit, but also a concrete cultural form. Cultural tradition is not limited to a way of displaying or indexing the past, but is a way of functioning and composing contemporary social life and constructing modern culture. Thus, in my view, whether alive or not alive can be a measure to distinguish “traditional culture” and “cultural tradition.” Cultural tradition is naturally retained and selected from the quintessence of traditional cultures in social progress, and is passed down to join contemporary life in its physical and spiritual forms in time and space.

In order to develop the local economy and accelerate local modernization through promoting local cultural tourism, Jixian utilizes local agricultural traditions and ancient cultural relics. The strategies include restoring ancient relics, recovering traditional cultural programs, and inventing new cultural products based on local natural resources and cultural characteristics. Although in the initial stage recovered programs (such as the folk craft workshops, puppet house, and the old mill shop in Xijingyu village) received local government and village committee financial support, they are still not able to survive except as a kind of display since they don’t fulfill social needs and are divorced from current economic life. We can categorize these unalive cultural items as traditional culture but not as cultural tradition. Cultural tradition comes from past but is continuously utilized and updated with new social elements and values and integrated into contemporary social life. Cultural tradition has strong vitality and penetrates contemporary social and economic construction. Cultural tradition is alive, not dead. The Dule Temple Fair is one local cultural traditions. It has existed for several hundred years. Except for the period of political prohibitions, the Dule Temple Fair has actively functioned in religious worship, social and economic exchange, and entertainment from the past to the present. For satisfying various needs and expressions in the contemporary social setting, the Dule Temple Fair combines with
traditions such as the ritual Guanyin ci fu, folk crafts, snacks, huahui performances and modern games, performances, and shopping. Traditions are repackaged but continued.

Agriculture is a cultural tradition in China. No matter how the world has been advanced to modern levels, food production is still the base of human life. From the past to the present, the core agricultural traditions that tie to rural land, wild environments, and farming activities are continuing. However, agricultural patterns have greatly evolved. In managing agricultural activities to meet the modern life style, modern idealization of agriculture heritage occurs. Rural tourism is an invented, modern product combined with cultural and economic activity based on the agricultural tradition. In Jixian, villagers have exchanged traditional agriculture with dull laboring work and a low return for leisure, rural, agricultural tourism, ecologic agriculture, and green agriculture. This development modernizes agricultural tradition to meet contemporary needs. Meanwhile, traditional activities and products, social units and life patterns in the traditional agricultural model are no longer suitable to modern agriculture and peasant life, thus, they declined, ceased altogether, or are recorded as history. For instance, the extended family pattern with several generations living together as a work unit to accomplish hard farming labor was a common traditional family pattern in the traditional Chinese agricultural society. In my field observation in Jixian, this pattern is hardly seen nowadays. Even though some old people still live in their old houses, the younger generation commonly no longer lives with them. The traditional ideology for Chinese farmers is that working in the field is the basis for earning a living. Peasants see land as the root of their life. However, nowadays peasants have choices other than farming. In Jixian, many young peasants immigrate to a city to pursue education, jobs, or entrepreneurships. Those who remain in villages could run a rural business, transportation, and rural tourism besides conducting agricultural activities.
Thus, traditional cultures from the past as historic references may not survive in the modern environment if they are not adapted to current social and economic situations; whereas, cultural traditions are generated from the traditional culture but survive in contemporary society materially and consciously through adaption and changes in both content and form. Cultural tradition is integrated into contemporary society and actively impacts on the social economy and cultural development.

**Authentic Tradition is the Tradition through Social Processes**

A statement reiterated in this research is that cultural tradition is not closed and static but open and changeable through historic and social processes. This seems a superficial view. However, it is the lack of such a simple view that has caused controversies in our field regarding the issues of preserving cultural heritage and continuing cultural tradition. Feng Jicai’s criticism of the phenomena of ancient town reconstructions in contemporary China is a typical example. Feng argues to keep historic objects in their original form, so the cultural value of objects can be preserved. Otherwise, a false tradition and valueless cultural object could be produced and passed down to later generations (Feng 2007). Feng Jicai insists on his inference because he views tradition as historical relics frozen in certain time and historic point rather than alive in the course of historic and social processes and progress.

This research shows that a traditional culture can be passed down and condensed to a cultural tradition. It survives in contemporary society through adaptive and creative processes—in Bauman’s words, the continuous social process of traditionalization (Bauman 1992: 32). In my view, if we see cultural tradition from an open viewpoint, tradition is processed based on its social reality, rather than a utopic past. As Michael Foster indicates, in his study of the old ritual
Toshidon on a Japanese island, “the discussion of UNESCO and Toshidon becomes part of the (process of) tradition itself” and “Toshidon is alive because the islanders themselves are alive; it changes because they themselves change” (Foster 2011: 92). The key to inquire into the importance of the invention of tradition is to ask who invents tradition and for what purpose (Su and Teo 2009: 137). In Jixian, the ancient town was reconstructed and cultural heritage resources have been utilized for developing local cultural tourism. Local government agencies and modern business enterprises have been involved in the reconstruction project, and various stores selling modern goods appeared at the ancient town site. This is the contemporary social reality because they occurred in the twenty-first century, in a modern and globalized social environment, no longer in an isolated, self-sufficient, traditional agricultural society. New materials, new elements, and new technologies are inevitably applied in the practice of tradition. As Jackson describes the situation of the Yuchi people, Woodland Indians in Oklahoma who performing ancestral forms of music, dance, and ritual and have integrated modern technologies into their cultural practices, using them to create documentary archives for historical and educational purposes and for personal enjoyment (Jackson 2010: 44). Thus, I argue that we should view authentic tradition in the twenty-first century based on the social realities, not only in Jixian, but also in elsewhere. We should interpret “authenticity” in the sense of “real” rather than merely “original.”

Processing tradition engaged in the contemporary world means making new modifications, new functions, new values, and new meanings. With such an open view of the nature of tradition and cultural invention, we may not simply assess these processed, constructed, and invented traditions as false and distorted traditional products. McDowell observes the breakthrough from recitation to performance during a folk belief session and the inclusion of
ceremonial speech on compact discs. He states, of “the multivocality of folklorization,” that “I contend that its products are not fatally corrupted, as is often supposed. Instead, I see a tendency in host communities to repossess that which has been folklorized and to fortify local cultural production through the creative adaptation of folklorized enterprises” (McDowell 2011: 32). In this research, based on my study of Jixian phenomena, as I discussed in chapter 4, I drew out a framework of processing tradition in three models: preserving tradition, which maintains the original form of traditional culture as a historical display; reconstruction and remaking tradition, which reconstructs ancient objects and recovers traditional customs and activities by adding contemporary components to meet contemporary social desires; and “inventing tradition,” which uses local environmental resources to create a new local culture and identity. The three models are all connected to the contemporary world objectively and subjectively. Of course, consequences from processing traditions must be examined. They either die out or survive depending on social reception in time and space.

The Relationship of Culture and Economy: Dynamics of Culture

In a negative perspective on the relationship of culture and economy, the rhetorical expressions “cultural commodification” and “heritage consumption” imply a kind of cultural degeneration, a threat to the authenticity of cultural heritage (Feng 2007), a separation of the form and content of heritage landscapes, a depthlessness of heritage products, and an easily manipulated representation (Su and Teo 2009:140). This research draws on Fei Xiaotong’s theory of the change of culture from the change of economic patterns and social structure (Fei 1983), as well as Myron Cohen’s theory of “economic culture” (Cohen 2005) to address how a
cultural tourism economy changes traditional, agricultural economic patterns and spurs
government, agencies, and individual actions for cultural preservation and cultural development.

Cultural tourism is an interactive product of culture and economy. In this interaction,
cultural tradition shows multiple values and functions in serving local cultural, social, and
economic development. Conversely, cultural tourism increases opportunities to engage in the
preservation, restoration, and invention of local culture and to enhance the significance of local
cultures. I admit that a tourism economy may cause certain negative effects to local people, such
as loss of lands and occupations, change in the way of life and the environment, a rise in the
price of local goods, and the invasion of outside cultural forces; however, from another point of
view, rather than blame cultural tourism for deteriorating local culture, this research argues that
cultural tourism can enrich and strengthen local cultural tradition while improving the local
economy. Economy can be dynamic in cultural restoration, invention, and construction.

Jixian shows us that economic development and cultural engagement may not always
exist in conflict. By appropriate implementation and management, these two objectives can be
achieved in the same process. The restoration of the Dule Temple and reconstruction of the
ancient town are good examples. The eight-year project of restoration of the Dule Temple
corresponded with Jixian local modernization plans for tourism economic development. The
ideal of restoring this ancient relic as a remarkable local cultural flag, and maintaining its
original façade is incorporated into promoting local tourism economy. The reconstruction of the
ancient town, while restoring it ancient cultural significance, the place also made it a nexus of
local commercial activities and entertainment. The reconstructed ancient town in the center of
Jixian town functions as part of locals’ economic and social daily necessities, from shopping and
dancing to social gathering. It shows a different scenario from Su and Teo’s description of the
ancient town of Lijiang, where they say that, “the buildings have maintained their unique architecture but the physical form alone does not constitute a community. Even in terms of activities carried out by the locals, they no longer reflect daily or regular activities undertaken by the Naxi. Many of these have been commercialized for the tourists” (Su and Teo 2009: 143).

The cooperative development of culture and economy through the village’s cultural tourism operations is also manifest in this research. The cases in Yushi village and Dapingan village show successful economic growth and local cultural development. The case of the failure of running traditional craft workshops in Xijingyu village otherwise demonstrates that economy is a matter for continuing traditional culture. Failure in an economic respect can cause the same failure in a cultural respect. However, local projects of cultural preservation and development motivated by the same economic purpose with different implementations could have different outcomes. The key is knowing how to conduct cultural tourism projects.

Power Relations among the State, Local Agencies, and Individuals

Aas, Ladkin and Fletcher indicate, “Many of the failures of the project may not be because of fundamental flaws in the initiative itself but in its application within the specific environment, exacerbated by the wider problems of developing countries.” Furthermore, they write, “In a country where tourism faces planning and management challenges, as well as fundamental problems of development, collaboration may seem difficult to achieve, as it is these external factors that ultimately make the concept problematic in application” (Aas 2005:44). In the context of China, the three dimensions of culture, economy, and politics are particularly related. The particular hierarchical power relations in China affect the outcome of cultural preservation and development. Generally, under the socialism control system in China, the
stakeholders in a program commonly include the central government, local agencies, external investors, communities, and individuals. The central government plays a role as the regulator, policymaker, and investor, and its local authorities implement policies and projects. The local community often plays a role as an acceptor of policies, the enactor of a program, and a receiver of outcomes. The upper-level authorities and investors possess more powers of decision making for a plan, so a participating community as one of stakeholders may not share equal right in the planning process. As a result, in the local cultural tourism developmental processes, as Su and Teo point out, “in Lijiang, we observe that the local government and tourism corporations add new meanings to various Naxi cultural forms and invent traditions, less to enable the locals to maintain a meaningful local or ethnic identity” (Su and Teo 2009:137).

However, in actual situations from place to place, power relations among stakeholders are complex and various to some extent, and outcomes are different. Ying and Zhou provide an instance from two adjacent villages, Xidi and Hongcun, in rural China. In similar social economic and cultural circumstances, and a similar natural environment, these two villages show dramatic differences in developing cultural tourism. Hongcun’s tourism is in a controlled situation since its exclusive rights have been transferred to an external company by the county government, and this shows a negative outcome. On the other hand, Xidi village’s committee has taken charge of the village tourism business and has achieved a great boost in tourism and revenue return. The Xidi community-owned tourism corporation guarantees funds for the restoration and maintenance of the community’s cultural heritage (Ying and Zhou 2007: 100).

In this research, Jixian’s cultural tourism has developed along with the central government’s modernization plans. The Jixian government follows national policies and guidelines to make base the local development plans and strategies on the local natural
environment and cultural resources. The general idea is to use local ecological and cultural resources, through collaborative work, to develop a mid-level tourist city. In the course of carrying out local government plans, communities and individuals are encouraged to find their own effective ways and strategies to achieve the general goal. In the hierarchical cooperation system, local communities and individuals themselves often need to wisely negotiate between government policies and self-determination. In rural areas, the villages and farmers respond to local government policies to develop village tourism by utilizing local environmental and agricultural resources to establish a local, unique cultural identity through cultural restorations and inventions.

However, from place to place, the situations vary. In Yushi Zhuang’s situation, the village committee led by party secretary Han Zhen made a series of ambitious village cultural construction projects to promote local cultural tourism. Since the village committee holds the rights of village’s tourism decision-making and benefit-sharing, Yushi village successfully imported UNSECO-named folk art master Yu Qingchen’s clay sculpture and set up clay sculpture as a local cultural trademark. They also reconstructed Wanfo Temple and made the huge stone carving of *The Portraits of Eighty Seven Immortal Beings* to enrich local cultural tourism spots. Since these cultural constructions have successfully brought to Yushi village more tourists and more economic returns, the village has been able to reallocate funds to support the clay sculpture workshop. Individual villagers have also received various benefits from the cultural tourism development, manipulated by the village committee, such as housing, income, senior care, and employment. However, since Xijingyu village was named a national ancient historic village, Xijingyu village projects have been controlled by upper-level authorities and the village’s committee has lost its right to make its own decisions for local development. With its
newfound fame, the village could receive government funds to implement its design plans, but the top-down developmental plan may not fit in a sustainable way with the long-term cultural and economic development in Xijingyu village. Thus, the failures in recovering Xijingyu village’s traditional workshops have been demonstrated.

The Jixian case makes it clear that in the social power relation system of China, if communities and individuals have the right to make their own decisions regarding programs, cultural programs may find a better fit with the local situation and can have more potential for a long-term, sustainable development. The poster for Xijingyu Village Historic Cultural Preservation Plan on the bulletin board in front of the building of the Jixian Planning Bureau shows an attempt to receive public feedback, encouraging the public to get involved in the project planning. However, if the poster was only displayed in Jixian town, but not in Xijingyu village, how many Xijingyu villagers would be aware of this poster and could come to town to speak out their opinions for the plan. From my interviews with the staff in the Jixian Planning Bureau and with Xijingyu villagers, I learned that the government at the township level was involved in the planning process, but no sign was put up to show that Xijingyu village committee and villagers could have participated in making this plan, so the outcome from this project is still questionable. This research work suggests that justifying power relations among the government authorities, external forces, local communities, and grass root individuals, and enhancing a local community’s right to decision making are necessary for a promised outcome and sustainable cultural preservation and development.

**One Process: Tradition and Modernity**
Tradition and modernity are usually conceptualized and categorized in a binary system. Tradition usually links with terms such as continuity, permanence, stability, and reproduction. In contrast, modernity links the terms like schism, change, dynamism, construction, and creation (Bessière 1998: 27). From tradition to modernity, people commonly apply words including change, transformation, evolution, destruction, and construction, as I described in the chapter one. The relationship of tradition and modernity was viewed either as an opposition or as a chain from the former to the latter.

This research states a key idea that tradition and modernity are co-constitutive aspects of a common process of social change. On a large scale, this research finding provides support for Myron Cohen’s position (Cohen 2005) on the study of China, in which he emphasizes an integration of tradition and modernity via process rather than a view of tradition and modernity as a chain running from the former to the latter, or as separated two things. This research argues that the relationship of tradition and modernity may not relate each other in opposition, revolution, or evolution. They can be conceptualized with a model integration and innovation.

Tradition participates in modern cultural, economic, social, and political construction and has multiple facets, functions, and values in contemporary social life and social settings. In this common process, tradition is updated to create something new. “The dynamics of building up heritage consist in actualizing, adapting, and re-interpreting elements from the past of a given group (its knowledge, skills and values), in other words combining conservation and innovation, stability and dynamism, reproduction and creation, and consequently giving a new social meaning which generates identity” (Bessière 1998: 27). In Jixian’s case, the local practical engagement of tradition and modernization reflects such an integration process. Restoring ancient relics, recovering traditional folk crafts, reconstructing the ancient town, and creating
new local cultural trademarks in village tourism—all these actions have been a part of the local modernization process. Villagers’ implementation of farmer’s guesthouses and agricultural leisure tourism also demonstrates that ordinary people have wisely creatively used and updated their cultural traditions and environmental resources to construct their modern life. Regarding the issue of the authenticity of tradition, these actions may cause panic among the cultural elites who view tradition just in terms of history and thus lament for the corruption of authentic tradition under the modernization process. This research work suggests that the process of modern construction is the continuity of tradition. Framing tradition in modern construction is a natural process and a social reality. Establishing the new vision and concept of “modern tradition” may provide us with new insight that dissolves the controversies over the relationship of tradition and modernity. From this point, I would like to take McDowell suggestion that “in addition to the much-discussed exploitation and transformation of local culture in post-modernity, we can devise a less-documented reflex, the reinforcement of local aesthetic practices” (McDowell 2011:7). This research work shows that Jixian locals have already been on the track in their endeavors to derive the future from the past (Glassie 1995).
Chapter 1

1. The notion of “framing tradition” is a key term presented in this work. The word “framing” with its meaning of purposed construction to fit to contemporary social needs, put together, build up, is used here to describe tradition in a changeable, adapted, updated and creative mode rather than in a static status. Through preserving, reconstructing, and making processes, tradition may be present from daily life behaviors to situated performances, from practical utility to abstract spiritual symbol, from primitive product to synthetic modern product. By using this term, I imply that tradition in a process model becomes a part of modern culture in serving various contemporary social needs.

The term “culture” as defined in this work, has been a most popular word in academic research, social actions, group activities, and individual daily life throughout the world. It is also as a dominant concept in both the humanities and the social sciences, and has gained its richest content and various definitions from different perspectives through history. Phillip Smith cites Williams’ (1976: 80) view on the definition of term “culture” as having three current uses: 1) to refer to the intellectual, spiritual, and aesthetic development of an individual, group, or society; 2) to capture a range of intellectual and artistic activities and their products (film, art, theatre)—in this usage, culture is more or less synonymous with “the arts,” hence we can speak of a “Minister for Culture;” 3) to designate the entire way of life, activities, beliefs, and customs of a people, group, or society (Smith 2001: 2). The first two usages have often been used in the humanities in studying high culture. The third one steers toward social life, beliefs, and social behavior, and has been favored in the disciplines of social science and remains central in anthropology and folklore. The present study goes with the third usage of culture. While emphasizing the description of an entire way of life (activities, beliefs, and customs of a people, group, or society) and people’s art activities, the values of a culture and the cultural tradition as spiritual and aesthetic knowledge are also studied.

Furthermore, in Philip Smith’s discussion of the term “culture,” he points out that the understanding of culture has shifted in subtle ways within the field of cultural theory. It revolves around the following themes: “1) Cultural tends to be opposed to the material, technological, and social structural. While it is recognized there may be complex empirical relations between them, it is also argued that we need to understand culture as something distinctive from, and more abstract than an entire ‘way of life.’ 2) Culture is seen as the realm of the ideal, the spiritual, and the non-material. It is understood as a patterned sphere of beliefs, values, symbols, signs, and discourses. 3) Emphasis is placed on the ‘autonomy of culture.’ This is the fact that it cannot be explained away as a mere reflection of underlying economic forces, distributions of power, or social structural needs. 4) Efforts are made to remain value-neutral. The study of culture is not restricted to the arts, but rather is understood to pervade all aspects and levels of social life. Ideas of cultural superiority and inferiority play almost no place in contemporary academic study” (Smith 2001: 4). To respond to the listed themes of cultural study, this study argues with the views of that culture opposes the material and the idea of the “autonomy of culture.”

2. According to the 2006 edition of Jizhou feng wu zhi (p. 105-109), the national protection territory of the Mesoproterozoic terrain (中上元古界标准地层剖面国家自然保护区) in Jixian, from Changzhou village at the foot of the Great Wall to the Mt. Fujun, displays the Mesoproterozoic
standard section aged from 1.8 billion to 0.8 billion years. This special terrain was first
discovered in 1931. In 1985, with approval from the central government and Tianjin city, the
Jixian Mesoproterozoic national natural protection territory was formally established. The core-
protected territory is 8.4 square km.

3. The Huangyaguan Great Wall in Jixian is a small section of the Great Wall in China located 28
km to the north of Jixian. The whole length is 42 km including 66 watchtowers, 52 defend towers,
and 14 beacon towers. It was initially built in 556, the period of Tianbao in the Beiji dynasty, and
restored in 1476 during the Ming dynasty. During the Cultural Revolution, the Huangyaguan
Great Wall was damaged badly. The sidewall was almost destroyed. In 1985, the three years
reconstruction project was undertaken. It restored 3025 m of the sidewall and added some new
facilities in the pass area, including a Great Wall museum, a tablet garden, and so on. In recent
years, some new programs such as the Huangyaguan International Marathon Long Distance
Running Competition and the Jixian Mountain Products Fair (Sept 28 - Oct 3) have been held
annually at the Huangyaguan Great Wall (Source: Jizhou feng wu zhi [2006], Local Cultural
Festivals in China [1992]).

4. Since the Chinese Communist Party established the PRC in 1949, the nation had closed its doors
to western countries and economically politically opposed western capitalism until the late 1970s.
In 1976, the chairman Mao Zedong passed away and shortly thereafter “The Gang of Four” was
deposed, which marks the end of the Cultural Revolution. In 1978 on the Third Plenary Session
of the Eleventh Congress of the CCP, Deng Xiaoping became the core leader of the CCP and the
Party proposed the new direction of the nation: fully open China to the world; learn western
advanced technology and modern management; undertake reform in various aspects; focus on
economic development and the construction of the four modernizations of industry, agriculture,
science and technology, and the national defense. Thus, from 1980s, China entered the new era of
the nation.

5. The exchange rates of the US dollar and Chinese yuan (RMB) were kept in the general range of
US$1= ¥8 before 2007. From 2007 to 2012, the exchange rates varied in the range of US$1= ¥ 7.5
~ ¥6.3 (US Foreign Exchange Services, Historical Rates). The income data cited here is adopted
and compiled from a Jixian Travel Bureau 2007 Report posted on the website of the Jixian Travel
Bureau; a printed report from Jixian county government titled “Tianjin Jixian xiu xian nong ye yu
xiang cun lu you fa zhan qing kuang (“Jixian Leisure Agricultural and Village Tourism
Development” 2010; and an online article “Jixian’s Investment Environment” posted on Jixian
Travel Bureau website in 2013.

6. Sun Zhongshan (1866-1925), commonly known as Sun Yat-sen in Western countries, was a leading
figure and the father of the Republic in China. After many years of preparation, he established the
Nationalist Party and led a revolution deposing the last Qing emperor in 1912. He became the first
president of the Republic of China. He advocated liberalism and democracy, ideas borrowed from
the West. Lu Xun (1881-1936) is generally recognized as twentieth-century China’s greatest writer.
He was an early practitioner of the modern short story. His best known works are his satirical stories
of the traditional Chinese society, such as Kuiang ren ri ji (狂人日记 The Mad-man Diary), Zhu fu
(祝福), criticize two thousand years of Chinese feudal rituals.

7. The report of the event was written by China broadcast network reporter Feng Yue and was posted
on the website Zhongguo guang bo wang on Sept. 6. 2011. The major Chinese media such as CCTV
website also posted this report. The dialogues between Feng Jicai and Wen Jiabao are cited in this
report. My English translation for the cited words is found in this reporting article:

9. Mo Yan (1955- ), real name Guan Moye, was born in Pingan Zhuang village, Gaomi, Shandong province in China. He has published many novels since 1981 and received many literature awards in China and overseas. Mo Yan’s well known works include Feng ru fei tun (丰乳肥臀), Sheng si pi lao (生死疲劳), Hong gao liang jia zu (红高粱家族), Wa (蛙). In 2012, he won the Nobel Prize in Literature for his work Wa. He is the first Chinese citizen who received this honor. His works tell various stories about his hometown with the literary name Dongbei xiang, Gaomi. In his stories, he narratives the twentieth-century history of China, rural Chinese society, and the life of ordinary people. He explores human nature in general and its struggles in particular, especially in an environment that is restrained by politics and economic conditions.

10. Tono, in the Iwate prefecture of northern Japan, established in the seventeenth century, is a castle town surrounded by mountain villages. Agriculture and horse trade were the main economic activities of the region. Tono became an actual administrative unit, a “town,” in 1889 during the Meiji period. In 1954, under the postwar municipal reorganization, the old town of Tono and the surrounding villages were incorporated into the new city of Tono. Japanese folklore founder Yanagita’s (1875-1962) work Tono Monogatari, published in 1910, textually established Tono as a national cultural sign of modernity’s losses—an authentic Japanese traditional storytelling world. The modern construction of Tono as a museum-park city, a visual world of the past and a canonical representative of Japanese tradition, took place from the 1960s to the 1980s. The two stages of construction of Tono’s past are reflections of crucial moments in modern Japanese history and cultural psychology in dealing with the conflicts of Japanese tradition and Western Japanese modernity. Japanese nostalgia and preservation of cultural tradition is the main theme in Tono’s recovery of the past.

Chapter 2

1. In “An Interpretation of Chinese Social Structure and Its Changes” (1946), Fei Xiaotong explains Zongfa: “Clan organization, which defines the propinquity among unilateral kin, regulates the inheritance of land in order to prevent any disruption caused by a confusion in the line of descent and to enforce the solidarity of the group. This is known as the zongfa in China, the system of decent.” In Fei Xiaotong’s Chinese Village Close-Up (Beijing: New World Press, 1983[1946]), 133.

2. Qiu Xiting’s preface to Minguo Jixian zhi explains the situation of Jixian local gazetteers. It is said that the old gazetteers include ones in Wenyuan ge shu mu, Tian yi ge shu mu, and Liao shi yi, as well one compiled by Zhao from the Congzheng second year of the Ming (1629) and the one compiled by Dong from the Kangxi seventeenth year of the Qing (1679). However, they were all missing. Jizhou gazetteers left today are the one compiled by Zhang from the Kangxi forty-two year of the Qing (1704) and the one compiled by Shen from the Daoguang eleventh year of the Qing (1831). The original text is cited as follows: “县有旧志文渊阁书目所载蓟州志蓟州图志 天一阁书目辽史拾遗所引汪浦熊相两志以及崇祯二年赵志康熙十七年董志均已久佚其存者.

4. Religious temples listed in *Jizhou zhi* (Vol.3, 457-477) include:风云雷雨山川城隍坛, 社稷坛, 先农坛, 历坛, 八蜡庙, 文庙, 武庙, 文昌庙, 城隍庙, 奎星楼, 火神庙, 马神庙, 龙王庙, 关帝庙, 药王庙, 天齐庙, 玄帝庙, 财神庙, 仓神庙, 仓神庙, 土地祠, 狱王庙, 张大明王庙, 眼光娘娘庙, 广福寺, 独乐寺, 白塔寺, 净土庵, 龙泉庵, 兴隆庵, 榆坡庵, 观音堂, 淮扬庵, 孔雀庵, 白衣庵, 圆通庵, 天宝观, 公输庙, 紫竹庵, 悟乐庵, 桃花寺, 娘娘庙, 三官庙, 三义庙, 龙泉寺, 龙风寺, 隆峰寺, 龙峰寺, 大圣寺, 龙山庙, 净土寺, 普渡庵, 文昌庙, 武庙, 五岳庙, 普渡庵, 白云庵, 通济庵, 甘露庵, 英国寺, 天齐庙, 西方寺, 皇姑庵, 茶棚庵, 吉祥寺, 天仙宫, 祠庙, 二圣庙, 药王庙, 无尽寺, 茶棚庵, 龙王庙, 关帝庙, 崇真庙, 五龙庙, 龙王庙, 龙泉庵, 眼光娘娘庙, 永寿寺, 大圣寺, 龙寿庵, 兴隆庵, 福善寺, 观音庵, 龙王庙, 永寿寺, 大圣寺, 龙寿庵, 龙泉庵, 五龙庙, 龙王庙, 关帝庙, 永寿寺, 大圣寺, 龙寿庵, 兴隆庵, 福善寺, 观音庵, 青龙寺, 护国寺, 义井寺, 观音寺, 普通寺, 东岳庙, 府君庙, 广成子殿, 弥勒庵, 云林寺, 崇真庙, 云泉寺, 广济寺, 白云寺, 盘石庵, 新泰庵, 永安寺, 海潮庵。Christianity recorded here is called *xifang si* (Western church). Christianity came into inner China during the Tang dynasty and spread widely in the Ming and Qing. As early as 1294, the Pope sent a missionary to Beijing. They built churches and translated Bibles. By the eighteenth century, Catholics grew to 300,000 (Cao 1991: 139-154).

5. See *Jizhou zhi* Vol.4, 594 “按：古人凡有功德于民者皆祀。下逮群臣百姓亦得致其诚敬。此群祀之始也。火神药王皆与生民相系。他如水旱之灾，所宜备焉。则坛社之设也。唯东岳非州县所宜立而世俗谓东岳掌生民者，非也。今人立庙致祭求福祈年亦所不禁。” (Ancient people worship and revere meritorious deeds. Deities such as the fire deity and the medicine deity are related to the daily lives of the people. Other temples, like the Dragon deity temple, remain to prevent disasters such as flood and drought, and to have plentiful material and crops. Only the Dongyue temple is not a local one, but people believe the Dongyue deity controls life spans, so people build a temple to pray for longevity and harvest.)

6. *Jizhou zhi* (Vol. 2, 292-295) describes other seasonal rituals and customs:

- “二十五日，早起以灰作圈，中藏五穀，名曰打囤，祈丰收之意。” (On the 25th, people get up early in the morning to use ashes to make circles and place grains inside, called *da tun*, or “hoarding,” in means of praying for good harvest.)

- “二月二龙抬头日，家家食饼曰龙鳞。初三日文昌诞辰演戏庆贺。三月用牲礼祈于社庙。” (The second day of the second month on the lunar calendar is the Long Tai Tou [the
Dragon raises Head) day. On this day, households eat round flat cakes, called long lin (dragon scale). On the third day, the birth of Wenchang is celebrated with dramas. Livestock is sacrificed at temples on the third month.

“清明陈疏馔, 挂纸钱, 扫坟, 添土, 簪柳于头。” (On Qingming day, food is placed and paper money is hung over tombs, and a willow branch is placed at the top of the tomb. Graves are cared for.)

“四月初八, 登崆峒山, 赛崔府君神。” (On the 8th day of the fourth month, people climb up the Mt. Kongdong and match in honor of deity of Cui Fujun.)

“五月端午节, 挂蒲悬艾角黍相贻, 儿女辈以色丝系颈, 名百岁索, 即长命缕也。” (During the Duanwu Festival, households hang calami and wormwood on doors, and people send dumplings [Zong Zi] to each other. Children wear colored string around their necks, called Bai Sui Suo [Centenary Rope], or Chang Ming Lü [String of Longevity]).

“七月七夕结彩乞巧。十五日设麻榖于堂。荐时食祭祖先, 亦有至坟前者, 其礼较清明稍杀。” (On the seventh day of the seventh lunar month, women weave color strings and pray for the talent of needlework. On the fifteenth, flax and crops are set in the halls of houses. Food is offered as sacrifice to ancestors, or is sent to the front of graves. This ritual is less serious than the Qingming holiday.)

“八月中秋, 亲友以瓜饼互相馈送。各家祭月光, 举觞庆月。” (In the Mid-Autumn Festival in lunar August, relatives and friends give fruit and cake to each other. People worship the moon and hold up a cup of liquor to celebrate the moon.)

“九月重阳节花糕, 饮菊酒, 携觞登高, 又秋成报社, 如祈年礼。” (Lunar September 9 is the Chongyang festival. People make floral cakes, drink chrysanthemum wine, and hike up mountains with a pot of liquor.)

“十月朔日, 剪纸为衣, 焚于坟前, 谓之送寒衣。佣工者例以此日还家。” (On the first day of lunar October, people cut paper to make paper clothes, which are then burned in front of tombs. It is called delivering winter clothes to the deceased. Workers return home on this day.)

“十一月冬至, 祭天地祖宗。” (On the Winter Solstice in lunar November, sacrifices are offered to the deities of Heaven and Earth, and to ancestors.)


8. Minguo Jixian zhi Vol.3, 105, describes other seasonal rituals:
“二月初二日为龙抬头。家家食饼, 谓之扯龙鳞。亦有吃饺子者, 谓之攀龙角。初三日为文昌诞辰演戏庆贺, 今废止。” (The second day of the second month on the lunar calendar is Long Tai Tou [the Dragon raises head] day. On this day, some households eat round flat cakes, called che long lin [tearing dragon scales], and other households eat dumplings, called climbing dragon horns. On the third day, the birth of Wenchang is celebrated with drama. Now this custom is abolished.)
三月用牲醴于社庙致祭，祈风调雨顺。（In the third month, people offer sacrifices in temples to pray for good weather for crops.）

清明日，陈疏馔，挂纸钱，扫坟添土，簪柳枝于头上。（On Qing Ming day, food is placed and paper money is hung at tombs, and a willow branch is placed at the top of the tomb. Graves are taken care of.）

四月初八日登崆峒山，赛崔府君庙。二十八日赛药王庙会，今废止。（On the 8th day of the fourth month, people climb up the Mt. Kongdong and match at the temple of Cui Fujun. On the 28th, people match at the Medicine God temple. Now it is abolished.）

五月端午节挂浦剑艾，人食角黍，儿女辈以色丝系颈上，名百岁缕，或抽荷包佩带，皆取趋吉避凶之意。十三日赛关帝庙会今废止。二十三日赛火神庙会，今废止。（During the Duan Wu Festival in May, households hang calami and wormwood on doors. People eat Jiaoshu (Zong Zi). Children wear colored string around their necks, called Bai Sui Lu (String of Longevity), or wear a hand-made decorated bag, mean to pursue good fortune and avoid disaster. On the thirteen day of May, people match at the Guandi temple. Today it is abolished. On the twenty-third day of May, people match at the temple of the Fire deity. Today this custom is abolished.）

七月七结彩线，用针乞巧。十五日设麻姑于堂，荐时物祭祖先，亦有至坟前上供并焚纸钱者，且有撤河灯擂鼓击钹，以逐疫者。（The lunar seventh day of the seventh month, women weave color strings and pray for the talent of needlework. On the fifteenth, people set the idol of Magu in the hall and offer food to ancestors. Some people visit tombs instead to lay offerings and burn paper money. In addition, there are people casting river lamps, beating drums, and play cymbals to expel disease.）

八月中秋节，亲友多以瓜饼互相馈送各家，祭月光，举觞庆月。（In the Mid-Autumn Festival in August, relatives and friends give fruit and cakes to each other. People worship the moon and hold liquor to celebrate the moon.）

九月九日重阳节，制花糕，饮菊酒，提觞登高。（Lunar Sept 9th is the Chongyang festival. People make floral cakes, drink chrysanthemum wine, and hike up mountains with a pot of liquor.）

十月朔日，剪纸为衣，焚于坟前，或街口路口，谓之送寒衣。佣工者例于此日还家。（On the first day of lunar October, people cut paper to make paper clothing and burn it in front of tombs or at the corner of the street. It is called delivering winter clothes to the deceased. Workers return home on this day.）

十一月为天长节，祭天地祖宗。（Lunar November is the Long Day festival, people offer sacrifices to the heaven and earth deities and ancestors.）

9. The Nationalist Party, also called Gumindang, became a political party in 1912 with the establishment of the Republic of China; it governed the Mainland of China from 1912 to 1949 and ruled in Taiwan after 1949. The Chinese Communist Party, also called Zhongguo gong chan dang, was founded in 1921 and, through elites and poor working class revolutionaries, political and military campaigns with Nationalist Party, finally won and founded the PRC in 1949, which has ruled Mainland China.

10. The statistics data is adopted and updated from the Jixian government official website, Jixian zheng wu wang. (Accessed April 2015)
Chapter 3

1. CNTA. “Zhongguo lu you ye fa zhan ‘shi wu’ ji hua he 2015/2020 nian yuan jing mu biao gang yao (The 10th five-year plan and long-term goal outlines up to 2015 and 2020 for tourism development in China).” (Beijing: China Tourism Publishing House, 2001).

2. This information about historic and geographic movement in Jixian region is based on the section “A Overview of Jixian Geography” in the book Jizhou feng wu zhi (Jizhou Sceneries Gazetteer) ed. by Jin Zhendong, Liu Chun and Dong Xiuna (Tianjin: Tianjin gu ji chu ban she, 2006).

3. This information is based on the section “Irrigation Constructions” in the book Jizhou feng wu zhi, ed. Jin Zhendong, Liu Chun and Dong Xiuna (Tianjin: Tianjin gu ji chu ban she, 2006). The lake was usually seen as just a water reservoir, and there were seldom tourists there. Now things have been changed. The lake was developed as a scenic tourist spot. The dam is a part of the magnificent scene. The same lake has gained a new social function and meaning.

4. The data is adopted from a pamphlet titled Dule Temple, which I purchased from a souvenir store inside the temple. The pamphlet includes a set of pictures of the temple and a description of the pictures in both Chinese and English, which is prepared for international tourists.

5. The data is adopted from a printed report by the Jixian government released in 2010. The title of the report is “Tianjin shi Jixian xiu xian nong ye yu xiang cun lu you fa zhan qing kuang (Developmental Status of Tianjin Jixian Leisure Agriculture and Village Tourism).”

6. The information and the pictures of Zhang Yinghui’s purple sand calligraphy and painting works (also called as ye yan shu hua 页岩书画 in Chinese) can be found on the Jixian Travel Bureau website at: http://www.jx-travel.com.

7. The printed material Jixian nong jia le lu you fa zhan gui hua (Jixian Village Happy Tour Development Plan) is produced by the Jixian government and the Dawosi tourism designing Institution in 2007 (Jixian ren min zheng fu and Dawosi lu you gui hua she ji yuan, 2007).

8. The original Chinese text for this slogan is “Zheng fu zhu dao, bu men lian dong, she hui can yu, qi zhua gong cu (政府主导, 部门联动, 社会参与, 齐抓共促).” See the Jixian ren min zhen fu 2010 report “Tianjin shi Jixian xiu xian nong ye yu xiang cun lu you fa zhan qing kuang” (Developmental Status of Tianjin Jixian Leisure Agriculture and Village Tourism).

9. This described scheme in Chinese is “中部古城悠悠神韵, 西部盘山魅力新村, 东部山水世外桃源, 北部长城名关小镇, 南部平原生态农业五个休闲农业与乡村旅游集聚区。” See Jixian nong jia le lu you fa zhan gui hua («蓟县农家乐旅游发展规划» Jixian Village Happy Tour Development Plan) produced by Jixian ren min zheng fu and Dawosi lu you gui hua she ji yuan, and also see the Jixian ren min zhen fu 2010 report “Tianjin shi Jixian xiu xian nong ye yu xiang cun lu you fa zhan qing kuang” (Developmental Status of Tianjin Jixian Leisure Agriculture and Village Tourism).

10. The original text in Chinese reads, “京津冀地区休闲度假胜地, 绿色食品生产和供应基地, 中等规模的现代化旅游城市。” See the Jixian ren min zhen fu 2010 report, “Tianjin shi Jixian
xiu xian nong ye yu xiang cun lu you fa zhan qing kuang (Developmental Status of Tianjin Jixian Leisure Agriculture and Village Tourism)”, 3.

11. The data is from the Jixian ren min zhen fu 2010 report, “Tianjin shi Jixian xiu xian nong ye yu xiang cun lu you fa zhan qing kuang (Developmental Status of Tianjin Jixian Leisure Agriculture and Village Tourism).”

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid.

14. When I interviewed Han Zhen, the party secretary of Yushi village, he commented on Yushi village’s life situation in the past.


Chapter 4

1. The descriptive information about Dule Temple utilized in this dissertation is compiled from multiple sources, including a tour pamphlet, Dule Temple, printed by the Jixian Relics Conservation Institution with the Dule Temple Tourism Administrative Office in 2007, and an introduction to the Guanyin pavilion in the courtyard of the Dule Temple.

2. Wei’s article is written in Chinese. The quotation is my English translation from original Chinese text. In this dissertation, all quotations originally written in Chinese are from author’s translation.

3. The image of a unicorn (qi lin) commonly decorates Chinese traditional architecture. About this creature and its symbolic meaning, C.A.S. Williams cites the Chinese Repository, Notices of Natural History, VII 1838-9: “The unicorn is supposed to combine and possess all the good qualities which are to be found among all hairy animals: it is invested with a skin of the gayest colors, endowed with a disposition of the kindest feelings; and a discriminating mind that enables it to know when benevolent kings or wise sages are to appear in the world, is attributed to it. The male is called chi, and female lin; it resembles a large stag in its general form; but combines the body of the musk deer with the tail of an ox, the forehead of a wolf, and the hoofs of a horse. See Outlines of Chinese Symbolism & Art Motives, 3rd revised edition (Dover Publications, Inc.1976), 414.

4. The earliest temple was found in Liaoning Niuheliang Hong shan cultural relic site and was characterized by the belief of ancestor worship. See Liaoning relics archeology Institution’s report “Liaoning Niuheliang Hong shan wen hua Nushen miao yu ji shi zhong qun fa jue bao gao [辽宁牛河梁红山文化女神庙发掘报告 Liaoning Niuheliang Hong mountain Cultural Goddess Temples Discovery Report].” Wen Wu no.8 (1986).

5. Ci Hai (Diction Encyclopedias), ed. Ci Hai bian wei hui. (Shanghai: Shanghai ci shu chu ban she, 1980).
6. *Tuo pian* is a technique using fine *xuan* paper to duplicate words or paintings made on wood or steel. This is a kind of traditional skill and can conserve maximum information of original works.

7. Traditional games of throwing coins and guessing lantern riddles are common entertainment from the past. In throwing coins, players try to throw coins called “*tong qian*” into a big hole of a coin like object. The person who can throw coins into the hole is predicted to become wealth and lucky. It is said, “Zhao cai na fu” （招财纳福）. Nowadays, players need to use currency to buy a set of the old *tong qian* coins and play it. This activity embraces the old belief, good wishes, and also is a way for the program organizer to earn money during the session.

8. The data was found on the Jixian Travel Bureau website at [www.jx-travel.com](http://www.jx-travel.com) in the section about “Souvenirs of Tourism” that introduces the development and marketing status of Jixian stacked stones and stone crafts.

9. The information was obtained from the Jixian Travel Bureau website at [www.jx-travel.com](http://www.jx-travel.com) in the section “Souvenirs of Tourism.”

10. Ibid.

11. This metal sculpture, *Bang Bu Zhu De Di Fang* caused controversy about whether or not a sexual object is appropriate present in a public place. In the past, sex was a taboo topic in Chinese public places, but the situation and people’s views have gradually changed along with the opening and western cultural influence. Now, rather than avoiding this topic, sex education has occurred in public schools, museums, and publications.

12. Yangliuqing, a town located east of Tianjin city, is one of the most famous woodcut Chinese New Year painting towns in China. The Yangliuqing woodcut Chinese New Year Painting has had more than three hundred years of history, from the late Ming dynasty, and has spread widely, from the Qing imperial palace to ordinary households. Nowadays, Yangliuqing has also become a cultural tourism spot. Niren Zhang colored clay sculpture is a family heritage in Tianjin. The first generation began with Zhang Mingshan, who started it in the middle of nineteenth century. Now Niren Zhang colored clay sculpture has been passed to its sixth generation. The Niren Zhang clay sculpture stresses coloring, shaping, and a lifelike style. The figures are taken from Chinese legends, folktales, dramas, classic novels, and local common people. See Zhongguo min su da xi, Tianjin volume: Tianjin min jian gong yi mei shu [Chinese Folklore Complete Collections, Tianjin Volume: Tianjin Folklore chapter 13: Folk arts and crafts], Chef ed. Tao Lifan, sub vol. ed. Shang Jie, (Gansu ren min chu ban she 2004).


Chapter 5

1. The incense used inside the Dule temple is *mu xiang* that is made of smashed wood rather than *cao xiang*, which is made of straw.

2. *Nuo* is a kind of primitive religious dance drama. Actors normally wear a mask to play the role of a deity or a supernatural figure from folk beliefs and myths.
Chapter 6

1. I got this material when I interviewed with the Dapingan party secretary Tan Zhong. The material was produced by the Dapingan Village Committee in 2010. It is a general report about Dapingan tourism.

2. The information was gathered from Zhang Chengyong’s website, www.tjzqzi.com, and a blog article titled “The Old zhi qing Zhang Chengyong Returned to the Countryside,” posted on February 22, 2010 by Liu Xin, http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_5d305d2e0100hd22.html, and a video from Tianjin TV’s interview with Mr. Zhang.

3. A TV program about Tianjin TV’s interview with Mr. Zhang was made in 2010. “Lin Tie Fang Tan: Shan li lai le ge da hu you (林铁访谈山里来了个大忽悠 Lin Tie Interview: A hu you [Instigator] Come to the Mountain)” can be accessed at the link: http://v.youku.com/v_show/id_XNjQxMzc2Mjky.html?from=y1.2-1-103.3.1-2.1-1-1-0.

4. The memoir Da Shan Li De Wen Hua Shu Ji 大山里的文化书记 (“A Cultural Secretary in the Mountain”) was written by Tan Zhong himself. It is a two-page informal document that narrates his life experience and his work in leading the construction of cultural programs in the village and developing village tourism.

5. When I was in the village, I saw an old couple using a stoneroller and a donkey to grind maize. They said it was made for feeding chickens. This old way was common in the past, but nowadays it is becoming unusual scene not only for tourists, but also for locals.

6. The data is obtained from the section “The Projects Looking for Investments” on the website of the Jixian Travel Bureau at www.jx-travel.com. A note should be given here that the Jixian Travel Bureau website does not always archive the previous years’ posted documents on its site. I have continued to look at the website from November 2008 since I prepared my paper on the topic related to Jixian, and I downloaded materials from the website. However, during these years, I found that the website has been updated several times, and some old documents are no longer available. Thus, some old sources from the website cited in this dissertation are based on the web versions from around 2008 – 2013, from my own collected and archived materials from the website.

Chapter 7

1. The concepts of diachronic and synchronic approaches were theorized by Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure in his book Course in General Linguistics, published in 1916. The diachronic approach considers the development and evolution of a language throughout history, while a synchronic approach describes a language’s rules at a specific point in time. The methods are applied in other fields such as social science. Refer to Wikipedia “synchrony and diachrony.”

2. This general developmental idea in the Jixian government is cited by Sun Zhengqing in the preface he wrote for the book Jizhou feng wu zhi. (Tianjin: Tianjin gu ji chu ban she, 2006 edition).
Bibliography


Liang, Sicheng. “Dule Temple History [独乐寺史].” In *Dule Si* [独乐寺], edited and printed by Jixian wen wu bao guan suo, 2007 (1932), 64-68.


Quan guo zheng xie nong ye lu you yu xin nong cun jian she kao cha zu [全国政协农业旅游与新农村建设考察组]. “Fa zhan nong ye lu you shi jian she xin nong cun de yi tiao xiao lu jing [发展农业旅游是建设新农村的一条有效路径 Developing Agriculture Tourism Is an Effective Way for Constructing New Countryside].” *China Tourism Newspaper* July 11, 2006. [http://www.xiaolangdi.cn/Info/show_kuaibao.asp?id=1120](http://www.xiaolangdi.cn/Info/show_kuaibao.asp?id=1120)


Zhang, Ting. “Bao liu rong yi chuang xin nan [保留容易创新难 Innovate is more Difficult than Reservation].” *Zhongguo wen hua bao* [Chinese Culture Press], January 4, 2011, sec.7.

Glossary

Abbreviations

CCP    Chinese Communist Party
CNTA   China National Tourism Administration
GDP    Gross Domestic Product
PRC    People’s Republic of China
RMB    Renminbi
ROC    Republic of China
UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
WTO    World Tourism Organization
WTO    World Trade Organization

Chinese Terms

CAI 菜   Dishes made with meat and vegetables
Chuan tong 传统 Tradition
Chun jie 春节 Spring Festival (Chinese New Year)
Chun lian 春联 Spring Festival couplets
Cun 村 Village
Dao 道 Road, way, principle (philosophic meaning)
Dao jiao 道教 Taoism/Daoism
Diecengyan 叠层岩 Stratified rock, stacked stone
Deng long 灯笼 Lantern
Doufu 豆腐 Bean curd
Erhu 二胡 2-stringed fiddle
Fan 饭 Cooked rice or other cereals
Fen jia 分家 Division of the household
Fu 福 Good fortune, happiness
Gai ge 改革 Reform
Gan bu 干部 cadre (leader, official)
Gu 鼓 Drum
Gu lou 鼓楼 Drum Tower
Guo wu yuan 国务院 State council
Huahui 花会 Role-played folk dance
Hunli 婚礼 Wedding ceremony
Jushi 居士 Buddhism follower
Jia 家 Household, also called Hu 户
Ju 剧 Drama plays
Kang 炕  Mud or brick made bed
Ke tou 磕头  Ritual obeisance
Lao ren 老人  Elders
Li 里  sub county unit
Majiang 麻将  Mah-jongg game
Minguo 民国  Republic
Min su 民俗  Folklore, folk customs
Nian hua 年画  New Year’s Paintings
Nong jia yuan 农家院  Farmer’s guesthouse
Piying xi 皮影戏  Puppet play
Qingming jie 清明节  Festival of Pure Brightness
Qingren jie 情人节  Valentine’s Day
Qu 区  Subcounty unit
Renminbi (yuan) 人民币  China’s currency
Sang li 丧礼  funeral
Sheng 笙  Mouth organ
Shuji 书记  Party secretary
Si ge xian dian hua 四个现代化  Four modernizations
Suo na 唢呐  Double-reeded horn
Tu 土  Local, parochial
Wen hua 文化  Culture
Wen hua ju 文化局  Cultural Bureau
Wen hua fa zhan 文化发展  Cultural development
Wen hua lu you 文化旅游  Cultural tourism
Wen hua yi chan 文化遗产  Cultural heritage
Xiang 乡  Rural Township
Xiao 孝  Filial piety
Xiao chi 小吃  Snack, little eats
Xin lang 新郎  Groom
Xin niang 新娘  Bride
Yang 洋  Foreign; Fashionable
Yangge 秧歌  Folk dance
Yuanxiaojie 元宵节  Rice-dumpling Festival, Lantern Festival
Yuanzi 院子  Courtyard
Zhongguo 中国  China
Zhong shang yuan gu jie 中上元古界  Mesoproterozoic section
Zhen 镇  Township
Zheng fu 政府  Government
Zhu shi 主食  Primary food
Zhuang 庄  Village
Appendixes

A Chart of the Main Lunar Chinese Festivals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preliminary Year (<em>Xiao nian</em>)</td>
<td>The 23rd day of the last lunar month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring Festival (<em>Chun jie</em>, Chinese New Year)</td>
<td>The 1st day of the 1st lunar month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yuanxiao Festival (Lantern Festival)</td>
<td>The 15th day of the 1st lunar month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring Dragon Festival (<em>Long tai tou</em>)</td>
<td>The 2nd day of the 2nd lunar month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pure Brightness Festival (Tomb-Sweeping Day)</td>
<td>Early in the third lunar month of the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Solar calendar: April 5 or 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dragon Boat Festival (<em>Duanwu jie</em>)</td>
<td>The 5th day of the 5th lunar month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Double Seventh Festival (<em>Qiqiao jie</em>, the Praying for Cleverness Ceremony)</td>
<td>The 7th day of the 7th lunar month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zhongyuan Festival (Ghosts’ Festival)</td>
<td>The 15th day of the seventh lunar month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-Autumn Festival (<em>Zhongqiu jie</em>)</td>
<td>The 15th day of the 8th lunar month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Double Ninth Festival (<em>Chongyang jie</em>)</td>
<td>The 9th day of the 9th lunar month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laba Festival</td>
<td>The 8th day of the 12th lunar month</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A Chart of the Main Chinese Solar Calendar National Festivals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Year’s Day (<em>Yuandan</em>)</td>
<td>January 1st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 1st International Labor Day</td>
<td>May 1st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 1st Communist Party Day</td>
<td>July 1st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Children’s Day</td>
<td>June 1st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Cultural Heritage Day</td>
<td>The 2nd Saturday in June</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Day</td>
<td>October 1st</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Curriculum Vitae

XIAOHONG CHEN

EDUCATION

Indiana University-Bloomington, Indiana, October 2015
PhD, Folklore and Ethnomusicology
Minors: Information Science; East Asian Studies

The University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario, Canada, 2000-2001
General Studies in Anthropology and Media/Information Science

Peking University, Beijing, China, 1986
Master of Arts, Folklore

Beijing Normal University, Beijing, China, 1983
Bachelor of Arts, Chinese Language and Literature

TEACHING WORK EXPERIENCE

Associate Instructor, Chinese Flagship Institute, East Asian Languages and Cultures
Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana, August -December 2012

- Involved in teaching Chinese Flagship course “Cultural Diversity in China”
- Selected and created course materials; assigned homework and exam sheets and grading; taught individual class sessions
- Organized curriculum activities: Chinese Movie Showtime and Chinese Conversation Partners

Associate Instructor, Chinese Flagship Institute
Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana, May-July 2012

- Taught Audio-Visual course “China in Globalization” to advanced flagship students
- Selected and created course materials; assigned homework and exam sheets and grading

Chinese Mentor, Chinese Flagship Institute, East Asian Languages and Cultures
Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana January - April 2012

- Tutored advanced flagship students on an individual basis in reading, writing and speaking
**Lecturer**, Osaka Chinese College, Osaka, Japan  1997-1998

- Taught advanced Mandarin courses for Japanese adult learners
- Acted as teacher with full responsibility on designing syllabus, delivering lectures and grading

**Lecturer**, Department of Chinese Language and Literature
The Minzu University of China 1986-1996

- Taught literature and culture courses to undergraduate students
- Taught Chinese speaking/reading courses to foreign students
- Researched in Chinese folklore and culture which led to publications
- Undergraduate student advisor

**FIELDWORK EXPERIENCE**

PhD Dissertation fieldwork, Jixian, Tianjin, China, 2011
Summer fieldwork, Tianjin and Shandong, China, 2008
Fieldwork, Yan’an, Shannxi Province, China, 1987
M.A. Thesis fieldwork, Yunnan and Sichuan, China, 1985
Summer fieldwork, Yangzhou, Jiangsu Province, China, 1985
Fieldwork, Southwest region, Guizhou Province, China, 1984
Summer fieldwork, Yangzhou, Jiangsu Province, China, 1984
B.A. Thesis fieldwork, Zhuang People in Douan and Bama, Guangxi, China, 1983

**PUBLICATIONS**

**BOOK REVIEWS (in English)**


ARTICLES (in Chinese)


BOOK CHAPTERS (in Chinese)


Publishing House.


BOOK TRANSLATION PROJECT

By William Hansen. 548pgs. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. Full content translation from English to Chinese has been completed and will be published in the future.

SCHOLARSHIPS AND GRANTS

Graduate Assistantship, Dept. of Folklore and Ethnomusicology, Indiana University, 2007-10
Indiana University/Nankai University Graduate Student Exchange Program Grant, 2007
Canadian Female Doctoral Students Special Opportunities Grant, 2005-07

LIBRARY WORK EXPERIENCE

East Asian Acquisitions Specialist
Indiana University Libraries, Bloomington, Indiana, April 2012-present

- Use integrated library systems to perform various library technique services
- Place orders for Chinese, Japanese, Korean monographs and audio-visual materials
- Search OCLC bibliographic database and import OCLC bibliographic records
- Create provisional bibliographic records according to MARC standards
- Receive East Asian and Tibetan materials from orders
- Receive gifts/exchanges from organizations and individual donors
- Cancel and claim orders and update paper and electronic files
- Communicate with vendors, collection managers, and library staff
- Hire, train, supervise and evaluate student assistant employees
Bibliographic Indexing Assistant
Folklore Bibliography Project, Indiana University and the Modern Language Association
Wells Library, Indiana University-Bloomington, Indiana 2007-2010

- Reviewed and indexed scholarly works in folklore, anthropology and literature
- Used electronic software to perform bibliographical indexing for monographs and articles
- Maintained electronic databases
- Communicated with MLA International Bibliography Headquarters
- Performed regular office administrative services and answered clients’ inquiries

ADMINISTRATIVE WORK EXPERIENCE

Licensed Agent
Canadian Scholarship Trust Consultants Inc., London, Canada, 2001-2003

- Communicated with local community clients; recruited new enrollments for the scholarship plans; processed applications; answered customers' inquiries; reported to the director of the agency; made schedules for appointments and meetings

LANGUAGE SKILLS

English (proficient professional reading, writing, and speaking)
Mandarin Chinese (fluent professional reading, writing, and speaking)
Classical Chinese (proficient professional reading and translation)
Japanese (moderate reading, basic speaking)
French (basic reading)

COMPUTER SKILLS

Microsoft Offices, Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook, Internet, Electronic Database, XML

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

American Folklore Society